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JULY 2015  
ISSUE NO 135

# 4x4

Going for coffee in the all-new Opel Mokka Crossover  
History Lesson: We look at the epic Lamborghini LM002  
Picking a Landy. Should you buy a 300TDi, TD5 or Puma?  
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The Power to Surprise



**Issue No 135**  
**July 2015**

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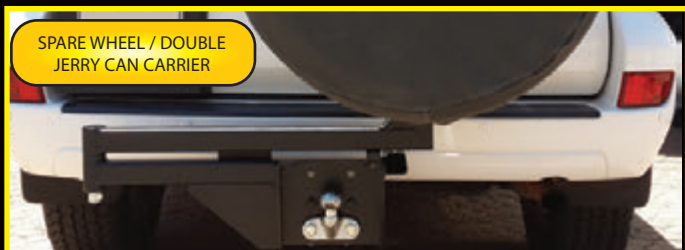
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# Letters

E-mail your views to [editorial@leisurewheels.com](mailto:editorial@leisurewheels.com) or submit them via our Facebook page or the website at [www.leisurewheels.co.za](http://www.leisurewheels.co.za), or fax them to 011 704-3047. We reserve the right to edit and shorten letters.

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## Ground clearance debacle

Many thanks for your response to my letter in the May 2015 edition regarding the exclusion of the VW Caravelle 4 Motion from the buyer's guide.

Your argument is that you exclude the vehicle on the basis that "ground clearance is a mere 167mm", which is 100% accurate. My concern, however, is that you include the following vehicles in your buyer's guide (some even in front-wheel drive only versions) with the following ground clearances:

1. Audi Q3 170mm
2. Hyundai iX35 170mm
3. Peugeot 2008 165mm
4. Suzuki SX4 165mm
5. Toyota Rav 4 160mm
6. Mazda CX5 150mm

Based on the above, I don't think your argument about the VW4 Motion's 167mm stands, since there are numerous examples of vehicles in your buyer's guide with lesser ground clearance.

**Marius Grobler, via e-mail**

*You win, Marius! As a result, we've decided to include the Caravelle in our buyer's guide. The new Caravelle T6 was recently unveiled to the international motoring press and we plan to do a driving impression or road test as soon as it arrives in SA.*

*It is becoming increasingly difficult to decide what to include and what to leave out of the buyer's guide. The lines between the various segments are becoming increasingly blurred as manufacturers introduce more niche models, such as the Citroën C4 Cactus and Renault Captur.*

*These new models, in addition to those you mention, aren't necessarily hardcore off-roaders, but they do offer access to a lifestyle that isn't possible for those who drive a saloon car or hatchback.*

*Perhaps the "lifestyle" argument is something to consider when deciding on the vehicles to include in the buyer's guide. – Ed.*

## Ask the owners

I drive an Isuzu KB, and although it is a vehicle that knowledgeable, serious owners will buy, it is (surprisingly) not quite perfect. There are certain (inexpensive) improve-

ments that the backroom designers (*manne met dik brillettjies*) have not thought of, because they don't live in the relevant markets or drive the vehicles full-time.

This is not an indictment of them, as they cannot be expected to identify every possible improvement, but rather an attempt to mobilise owners out there who live with their vehicles for several years at a time and see what can be improved upon.

I know of similar improvements that could be made to Toyotas and Nissans, for instance, and to other makes, too. I would go so far as to say that an advertising campaign with some of the suggestions might be justified.

**Mike Eaton, via e-mail**

*That's a brilliant idea, Mike. Isuzu feels the same way, because it did exactly that in September 2014. The KB received a minor facelift following constructive feedback from loyal Isuzu owners from around SA. – Ed.*

## The Outlander is underrated

One year ago I decided to buy a second-hand SUV. I thought I was quite thorough by first compiling a list of possible contenders and then reading all the available road tests. I took a few weeks to compare specifications and to test drive about seven of these cars.

Then, while testing another contender, I noticed a Mitsubishi Outlander on a dealer floor. This was a car I hadn't even considered.

The first thing that struck me about it was how easy it was to get in and out of, because of its ride height. Behind the wheel, the car felt nice and compact yet it had lots of space. I was really surprised by

the quality feel of the Outlander, and the smooth ride. The brilliant sound system was the cherry on top.

Suddenly my search was focused on getting an Outlander. There were not too many available, but I was once again surprised by how reasonably priced they were compared to the other cars I had tested.

A week later I bought an Outlander with very low mileage, in mint condition and about 15% under my budget. Now, a year later, I am extremely satisfied with my "clever" purchase.

Surely the Outlander must be the most underrated SUV/car on the road?

**Barry van der Berg, Bellville**

## VW Touareg woes

I bought a second-hand 2008 VW Touareg (50 000km) in 2010. It was still under a full maintenance plan.

A problem arose soon after I bought it. It would lose all power in dangerous circumstances. I took the vehicle to VW Rustenburg, who said they couldn't find anything wrong on the computer. I realised that the car's computer resets every time it is switched off. This happened often, at any time and place.

In Pretoria it happened again under very dangerous circumstances. VW Rustenburg told me to take it to Hatfield VW. The turbo had to be replaced.

The maintenance plan had expired by now, as well as the guarantee. But the problem was not solved.

In 2014, I went on holiday to Nature's Valley. Travelling to Plettenberg Bay on 28 December 2014, the car again lost all power. I contacted VW Uitenhage (where I had laid previous complaints) and was referred to VW in Knysna, where I was informed that the throttle valve had to be replaced. This was eventually done in Rustenburg, and I had to pay R8300.

I was not satisfied, and asked Andre Maree of VW Rustenburg to get into the car and travel with me on the highway. The same problem – total loss of power – happened as we attempted to pass a long heavy vehicle.

After all this, VW Uitenhage informed me that the guarantee and maintenance plan had expired and all costs would be for my





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own account. Both the Rustenburg and Uitenhage people said the vehicle needed a third turbo replacement, a new exhaust manifold and a few other spares, at a cost of R44 8562.

My total expenditure on this VW Touareg is now R94 000. The problem is still not solved and as a pensioner I am now left in the hands of VWSA.

It is the worst vehicle and service I have experienced in 48 years of motoring. The vehicle is still not fixed and is standing at VW Rustenburg.

**Izaak Rabie, Rustenburg**

#### **Andile Dlamini, Volkswagen's public relations manager responds:**

*Mr Rabie's vehicle was sold subject to the terms and conditions of the factory warranty and Volkswagen Automotion Maintenance Plan. Both these have expired.*

*While we acknowledge Mr Rabie's concern and regret his disappointment, the current issue is in no way linked to the previous turbo related issues experienced in 2012. Had this been the case, the turbo would have failed much sooner.*

*According to our records, the vehicle does not have a full service and repair history within our franchise dealer network. The last recorded service through a Volkswagen dealer was carried out during 2012. The service booklet reveals no service in 2013, with an annual service in 2014 carried out through a service centre not associated with VWSA. We therefore do not know what the vehicle has been exposed to during the past two years.*

*The vehicle falls outside all warranty and goodwill parameters and we are, regrettably, not in a position to contribute towards the required repairs.*

## **Subaru Centurion goes a thousand miles**

I bought my first Subaru Forester in 2006 because it was a good car. It was only later that I became aware of Subaru's exceptional service. But how far should after sales service go?

On Friday, 8 May, I had an unpleasant surprise when I was accosted by the police, because my car was reported stolen in December 2014. It soon emerged that it was a case of mistaken identity, because the person whose car was stolen that night had made a one-digit mistake that put my car on the police hot list!

I went to Subaru on Monday, 11 May, to get some documentation to help me sort out the problem. What a surprise! The salesman I dealt with, At Henn, immediately realised that I wouldn't get far in sorting out the problem on my own. He accompanied me to the police station and helped me through a process that took a week to sort out. I estimate that he devoted at least 12 hours of his time in helping me, and I know that without his assistance I wouldn't have made a dent in the problem, which is now completely solved.

I cannot thank At, Chris, the dealer principal, and the rest of the staff at Subaru Centurion enough for not just going the extra mile, but going the extra thousand miles.

**Dr J A Myburgh, via e-mail**

## **Off-road adventures on YouTube**

As an avid reader of your magazine, I wish to bring to your and your readers' attention that I have just produced and released a new series of 4x4 travelogue video film documentaries.

It is aimed primarily at SA viewers and has



been released on YouTube, where it can be viewed free.

Narrated in Afrikaans and titled "4x4 na ver," it comprises 15 episodes, each of about 40 minutes.

The series documents my travels as a veteran 4x4 explorer through Namibia and Angola from 1996 to 2007.

While filming the series, I always tried to scratch a bit deeper in order to better understand the geography and the people of the regions.

Gaining access to the films on YouTube is easy. Go to Youtube.com, enter "4x4 na ver" in the search bar at the top of the web page (remember to include the quotation marks) and, Voila!

Readers are welcome to contact me at rheunis@telkomsa.net should they wish to chat.

**Rulan Heunis, via e-mail**

## **No to chipping**

I wish I had seen your article in the October 2014 edition of *Leisure Wheels* before my recent expensive experience of chipping a Mitsubishi Pajero.

Yes, I got the increased performance and better fuel consumption, but it was short lived. In fact, the fuel consumption eventually got worse by 40%!

In deciding to install the chip, I approached an installer based in Strydom Park, Johannesburg, and was impressed by their extensive workshop facilities.

I asked whether any damage could be done to the vehicle by installing their chip, and the obvious answer I received was no. So I went ahead with their recommended chip and also their recommended change to the exhaust system at a cost of R30 000.

When the fuel consumption deteriorated I went back to the installer. He said that either the injectors or the fuel pump could be faulty, and it had nothing to do with their chip!

I sought the opinion of another expert, who recommended the immediate removal of the chip. I was told that chipping was the worst thing I could have done to the vehicle.

The chip was removed (including reinstalling a specification compliant exhaust)



at a cost of R10 000 and the fuel consumption returned to the same level it had been before the vehicle was chipped.

Any Pajero owner thinking about chipping should take heed of the comments of Steven Terblans of Mitsubishi SA in the article mentioned earlier.

Patrick Cooke, via e-mail

## Niggling tyre technicality

Francois Rossouw's article, "An essential item on that trip", in the May 2015 edition refers. Without detracting from the well-written and interesting article on the necessity of carrying a compressor on overland trips, I would like to point out a technical error regarding tyre pressures and heat.

The article states that "heat increases the volume of the air and subsequently raises the tyre pressure." In fact, tyre pressure does not increase as a result of the volume increasing.

The pressure increases as a result of the temperature increasing. The volume only increases because the tyre walls give way to the increase in pressure. A technicality, I know, but one that is important to understand.

Chris Hughes, via e-mail

## A few tips for Ford

After receiving my monthly copy of *Leisure Wheels*, I read all letters first, as the diversity in correspondence is always stimulating. Once more, big was my surprise in reading my own letter, concerning the all-Ford collection of mine. Thank you for the attention!

If one has a hobby, at least one should do it in earnest. It keeps me alive and I am always hungry for more of the latest developments within the Blue Oval's empire.

As mentioned before, I suggest the Ranger needs a powerful V6 turbocharged petrol engine for conquering dunes! Trips between Lüderitz and Walvis Bay via the harsh Namib are getting increasingly popular.

The EcoSport, which sells up a storm locally, would also enhance desirability for those who like off-roading once in a while if it was fitted with the Kuga's 1,5-litre petrol engine and all-wheel drive. The 110kW and 240Nm of torque would be just fine. Most of its direct competitors are equipped with just that, and besides, lots of South Africans are outdoor people.

Lastly, the forthcoming all-new Figo should include a GT-version. Not for me, however, as I am opposed to speeding, but for the owner who loves spirited but responsible driving.

Thanks again for the most complete outdoor magazine money can buy.

W Dyck, via e-mail

## Sideways crossing

My big scary audacious dream is to travel from Gauteng to London. The current record from Cape Town to London, achieved in 2013 by Phillip Young and Paul Brace in a Fiat Panda, is 10 days and 13.5 hours. Dreaming at the campfire, glass in hand, I was convinced I could beat this. But reality in the light of day, what with money considerations, border posts and unrest in some countries, prevent this from happening.

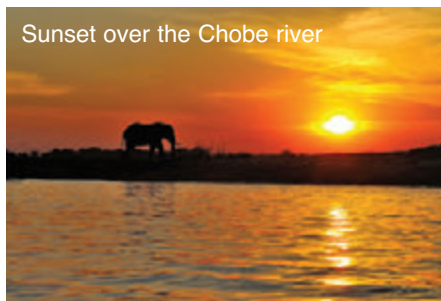
Nevertheless, from these thoughts our trip from Gauteng to the western Atlantic coast and Kaokoland was born. Two couples, two cars with extra tyres, fuel and water set off, prepared for anything.

I would love to tell you that we broke down, had dramas and fought our way through the adventure. We didn't. It was certainly an extreme challenge, but I'm glad we did it.

We went to Botswana first, and enjoyed an unforgettable sunset cruise on the Chobe River. We drove through Caprivi and visited some of its reserves, such as Mamili, and then went on to Mahango Game Park, Popa and Ruacana Falls and the most splendid of them all, Epupa Falls.

Then the going got tough. Van Zyl's Pass is a formidable obstacle and a while back I established the "Pave Van Zyl's Pass Foundation" (current membership: 1, assets: R10). But once you have conquered this mountain pass, the most beautiful landscapes await you. The hauntingly enchanting Marienfluss valley, the green Hoarusib River Gorge, where water often flows in winter, the desolate and barren Ganias Plain, the dry, sandy Hoanib River and many other sights are etched in my mind as special places in Africa. We even had a fleeting glimpse of a cheetah, with no fences anywhere.

The life of the Himba people is tough. The landscape they live in is a harsh one. Our campsites were mainly community owned, giving us an opportunity to meet the



people and understand them a little.

The unexpected beauty of the area is what I will take away from this trip. Although it was not a journey from Cape Town to Cairo, I am at peace with my sideways cross.

Come on guys, you too can make this your next destination.

Henner von Eisenhart, Broederstroom

## A better soft-roader solution

Thank you for a great magazine. My father and I read our monthly copy back to back.

I am writing about the so-called soft-roaders and the crossover class of vehicles in daily urban use, though they might occasionally be required to tackle a fairly sandy or muddy road.

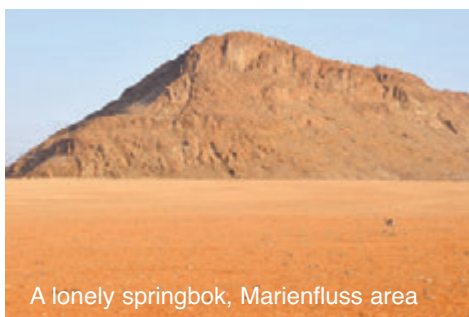
Firstly, almost all soft-roaders have no transfer case or low-range gearing and employ an automatic four-wheel drive. So far, only the old VW Syncro Kombi and recently both the VW Amarok and Renault Duster have a donkey-type short first gear to overcome a lack of low range gearing.

The Renault Duster has a manually lockable centre differential enabling a 50/50 torque split, while the Amarok has a 40/60 torque split between front and rear axles. The Amarok also has a manually lockable rear differential.

Other soft-roaders use a computer-controlled system that is normally front wheel drive, employing drive to the rear wheels only when slippage is detected.

Driver input here is steering and throttle input, with an electronic system sorting out the rest.

Arguably, this may not be as effective off-



road, but this type has the caveat of possibly providing greater safety and control in low grip situations on tar roads, where a soft-roader will spend most of its life anyway.

Moving on to the crossover class of vehicle, they are mostly front wheel drive. With the aid of CAD (computer-aided design) and today's electronics, it should be possible to employ a driver engaged locking front differential, with safety in mind.

This item can be engaged with the following provisos:

1. A switch on the dashboard to be depressed for a period of five seconds.
2. The locking differential to lock only in first gear.
3. Automatically disengaging above a predetermined maximum speed or engine red line.
4. Disengagement if the foot brake is depressed. The engines cooling system fan could be enabled to run when such a system is engaged.

To my mind, in combination with improved ground clearance and a well-chosen short first gear is a viable option in dealing with occasional excursions into sandy conditions.

Yes, a lockable 50/50 torque split 4x4 system is without doubt better and low range is best, but in terms of cost and compromise, peeling back the layers might be the answer. The idea here is to provide more capability to the man in the street and minimise both the cost and weight penalty of a drive shaft and second rear differential.

Graeme Dicks, Langebaan

## Facts on Skeleton Coast

Being a regular reader of your magazine, allow me to rectify some statements made by Francois Rossouw in a recent article. As pioneers of self-drive guided tours on the Skeleton Coast, we feel it is of utmost importance to know the facts about all points of interest on the route.

At present only two legal operators run these trips – my company, Desert Magic Tours, and Omalweendo. Here are the facts:

### 1. Ben du Preez's drilling rig

This rig sank three boreholes in 1974, with one of them intersecting several coal horizons, but unfortunately there was no sign of oil. As the company then went into liquidation, the tower was lowered into a frame and served as a resting place for cormorants. After years of exposure to the harsh elements, this rusted frame finally collapsed. So, the drill rig did operate and no main cable failure caused it to collapse.

### 2. Ventura bomber engines

The Ventura PV-1 bomber used Pratt &



Whitney Wasp R2800-31 double stack radial engines – two rows of radial cylinders with 18 cylinders in total. The engine on the beach is in fact only one which has come apart at the central seam or flange, with the two halves having separated over a 70-year timespan.

In the 1980s, the SAAF recovered the second engine and it can now be viewed in the SAAF museum in Swartkop, Pretoria.

### 3. Dunedin Star shipwreck site

The Ventura bomber landed near the shipwreck in a saltpan where the wheels sank too deeply into the ground for it to get air-

borne again. No passengers or ship crew were used to try to push it out, and no test flight was ever taken after this. Everybody was rescued and taken out of the Skeleton Coast Park by 28 December, 1942.

Only in January, 1943, did a salvage party from Wingfield, under the command of WO Slingermann, return to the Ventura bomber. It was pulled free with a Caterpillar tractor and all sand was removed from the engines, but after start-up only 40lbs/OJ in oil pressure could be achieved in the starboard engine, which was not nearly enough for a plus minus 2000 HP Wasp engine.

Capt Naudé still chose to get the plane airborne, but on the final run the plane bounced off a small dune. This dipped it to one side, scraping the port wing tip and bending it upwards. This led to the scraping of the starboard wing tip, also bending it upwards. Once in the air, the plane remained at 300 feet above ground and could not gain altitude. Then the starboard engine oil pressure dropped to zero and seized within minutes. The plane crashed into the sea about 95km south of the Dunedin Star.

This information was received from Aleric V Rudman, who was the flight engineer and tasked to help with the rescue mission as well as maintaining the Ventura, so he was a first-hand witness of what happened.

Rudman and another volunteer, named Hofmeyr, were in the plane when it crashed. Rudman helped Capt Naudé and Hofmeyr get to shore and took the long walk to intercept the departing overland convoy and rescue them.

**4. The Bulldozer 5km north of Möwe Bay**  
It had its engine refitted and was driven back to Möwe Bay.

Volker Jahnke, Desert Magic Tours

*Thank you for the information, Volker. – Ed.*

## No Go for Datsun

We really think Alan Moyle (May edition) misses the point regarding the Datsun Go safety debate. He says that at prescribed traffic speeds his seat belt would provide adequate protection, and the lack of airbags and ABS brakes does not compromise safety. In another letter, Mr Van Rensburg says the Go is no less safe than many older cars and safer than a 125cc motorcycle. This is also missing the point.

The danger highlighted in crash tests is that the car collapses. The front end is so structurally weak that it will not provide reasonable protection, and fitting airbags would be a waste of time and money



because of the inherently deficient front-end structure.

Many would argue that as an entry-level vehicle, the Go would be bought by inexperienced drivers – in other words, the very people who need safety features.

We suspect that seat belts do provide a good level of protection, but if the front end collapses due to a lack of proper structural rigidity, the seat belt won't save you.

To say that because manufacturers used to make dangerous vehicles, and that a motorbike is even more dangerous, seems a very poor reason to attempt to justify a car that crash tests have shown to be downright dangerous. How irresponsible of Nissan to continue to sell a car that is, quite frankly, a mid-sized accident death trap.

As Datsun doesn't disclose these failings, it is up to the motoring press to do so.

If every potential buyer saw the crash test photos, 80% of them wouldn't buy this product. So perhaps the answer is to inform buyers and then let them make

their choice.

**John and Mary-Anne Simpson, via e-mail**

*That's a good point about making information available to customers, but other than the safety ratings from independent organisations such as Euro NCAP, not much research is available on the subject.*

*As a matter of interest, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety in the US found that small cars almost always fare badly in crash tests. In 2012, only one small car out of 11 tested achieved an acceptable rating. The Chevrolet Spark was the only small car to earn an acceptable rating in the "small overlap front test".*

*The research on how people drive is even more interesting. When we looked at studies that provide information on cars with high fatality rates compared to the number of models sold, the sports cars came out at the head of the list. It makes sense, because the harder you push a car the bigger the resulting accident will be.*

*For the record, the safest SUVs you can buy, according to the Euro NCAP results,*

*are the Nissan Qashqai and Land Rover Discovery Sport.*

*With that said, we consider the debate on the Datsun Go's safety rating closed. – Ed.*

## Rather be safe

While sympathising with the de Gale family who were robbed (page 78, June issue), we have experienced wonderful camping tours along the Chobe riverfront.

However, since the folk with criminal intent are able to quietly cross the river in their mokorros, it is best to camp with a second family.

**Martin Briggs, via e-mail**



**TJ's**

**FORECOURT**



## Tired of bad service

Why do we put up with bad service? Isn't it time we demanded more? TJ has used a recent disappointment to motivate him into providing the best level of service he can...

**The general level of** customer service has declined so much over the past few years that it is actually quite easy to make customers happy these days. Back in the day, you needed to go "above and beyond" the call of duty to satisfy a customer. Now it is as easy as simply providing the product or service you promised in the first place.

As customers, we feel we have received excellent service simply when a phone is answered promptly or an item is dispatched when promised. And instead of demanding better service, we accept the rude and shabby treatment we receive.

At the start of the year I decided to trade in my old vehicle for a new one. I approached my bank, which has had my business for more than 17 years, and filled out the necessary forms to finance my new steed. The salesman at the Toyota dealership had asked me if I wanted to use their in-house finance option but I declined, believing that as my bank had

known me for a long time there would not be a need for much paperwork. At least, that is what I thought.

A week after I had completed the forms, the bank came back to me, needing a set of cash-flow statements and various documents. I submitted these, and waited.

I spent the following few days e-mailing and phoning the bank to find out what was going on, and as we entered week three, I flipped out. I was tired of waiting!

The vehicle salesman approached me again, and asked if I did not want to try using their finance option after all. I reluctantly and rather rudely filled out the four-page document, and told him that I would now await a torrent of e-mails asking for further documents and details.

I submitted the document at 15h30, and the following morning at 09h30 there was an e-mail from the dealership in my inbox. I hesitantly opened it, expecting nothing but frustration.

"Congratulations, your finance has been

approved," the e-mail stated. How could this be? My bank did not trust me enough or have the expertise in its service department to provide me with what I needed, yet another bank that did not know me from Adam had made a quick decision about my credit worthiness.

When I applied for financing a decade ago, it had been approved in four hours. At the time, I hadn't thought much about it. I simply accepted it. Now the same thing suddenly seemed like exceptional service.

I have used the latest experience as motivation in my business. I am determined to provide the best possible level of service to my customers. After all, with service being so terrible in general, it doesn't take much to look like a saint!

I would like to thank all those idle companies out there for making business so much easier for me in the service department. Keep up your hopeless performances and make me look like a beacon of excellence in the process!



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# Driving the Fury Road

## OUR OPINION

GG van Rooyen **Road Test Editor**  
gert@leisurewheels.com



**Towards the end** of 2012, while travelling through Namibia's so-called Moon Landscape in a convoy of bakkies, we stumbled upon a scene straight from a science fiction film.

As its name suggests, the Moon Landscape region pretty much always looks like a sci-fi movie set. But this time something was different. Someone had tampered with the desert. Strange buildings dotted the landscape and someone had plastered the rock walls with fake stones.

What was going on? Despite these additions to the landscape, the area was deserted, so there was no one to ask. The place was completely empty, adding to the eeriness of the scene.

Back home, I decided to do a little internet research and get to the bottom of the mystery. It didn't take me long to discover the truth.

The much-anticipated (and much-delayed) *Mad Max: Fury Road* was being shot in Namibia. We had driven past the film's sets in the Moon Landscape.

The *Mad Max* franchise has been around for a long time. The first film

came out in 1979, and a sequel, *Mad Max: The Road Warrior*, followed in 1981. There was also a third film, in 1985, which starred Tina Turner as Auntie Entity, but this one wasn't memorable.

The *Road Warrior*, though, was a seminal piece of work, offering moviegoers unparalleled action. For petrolheads who love a good movie car chase, it remains one of the greatest films of its type. *The Road Warrior* is essentially a 96-minute car chase.

But the presence of the *Mad Max* crew in Namibia did pose an interesting question: Why was the fourth film in the series not being shot in Australia? After all, it has always been a quintessentially Ozzie franchise, and has always been filmed Down Under.

The reason *Mad Max* moved to Africa, it turns out, was that the normally post-apocalyptic Australian Outback suddenly wasn't looking so post-apocalyptic any more. The plan had been to film the movie near Broken Hill – the same place where the original was shot – but a new location suddenly had to be found.

Following years of drought, the heavens had opened over Broken Hill, and the Outback was covered in a blanket of flowers!

As any Hollywood producer will tell you, if "post-apocalyptic" is what you want, you head for Africa, and Namibia in particular. This is what the *Mad Max* crew did, which was how they ended up in the Moon Landscape.

Unsurprisingly, *Mad Max* and his cohorts caused havoc in the desert. Director George Miller, who had made all the *Mad Max* films, was intent on creating a massive spectacle. Not only did he have a huge budget to work with (the film ended up costing US\$150 million), but technology had advanced so much since the third film that Miller wanted to produce something that hadn't been seen before – the typical *Mad Max* chaos splattered over an epic canvas.

To accomplish this, he produced a ludicrous 450 hours of raw footage that would need to be cut down to a two-hour movie. While computer effects were used, he also wanted practical stunts and effects to be the foundation of the film, so he built more than 130 working post-apocalyptic cars and crashed them for months on end.

**He built more than 130 working post-apocalyptic cars and crashed them for months on end.**

The studio groaned about the budget, the actors complained about the endless shooting and the Namibian media reported that the production was damaging the sensitive desert eco-system.

The shoot turned into a nightmare, and when filming was finally wrapped up, Miller disappeared into his dark editing room. Hardly a peep was heard about *Mad Max: Fury Road* for almost three years, and considering the production issues, everyone was expecting a mess of a film.

Well, George Miller has created a masterpiece. The film opened in the middle of May to universal acclaim. There is no doubt that this is one of the best car films ever made, which is why I implore you to go and see it. It won't be showing in cinemas for much longer, and it truly deserves to be experienced on the big screen. No car fanatic should pass up the opportunity to watch all those screaming, steaming V8s thunder through the Namibian desert! **LW**





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**18 Years**  
1996-2014

# Lower speed limits are not the answer



## OUR OPINION

Gerhard Horn **Features Editor**  
gerhard@leisurewheels.com

**Road safety** is a hot topic at the moment, and that's absolutely fantastic. I applaud the implementation of the recent child seat laws, and I'm elated that we finally have a Transport Minister who is actually doing something. It may not always work, as we saw with the recent Easter death toll that ended up being higher than the year before, despite the heavy police presence on the major routes, but at least it was a step in the right direction.

Now Minister Dipuo Peters has revealed more plans to make motoring safer. Most of them seem like good ideas, but two of the proposed changes are ridiculous.

First, the good news. The minister has made two important proposals about transporting people in bakkies. No more than five adults will be allowed to travel in the back of a bakkie, and transporting children this way will be outlawed.

This is a good move. It may be fun to stand on the back of a moving bakkie,

but it is an extremely dangerous practice, as anyone who has seen what happens when one overturns with passengers on the back will testify.

The second worthwhile proposal, which I believe will lower the number of deaths on the road, is the banning of vehicles heavier than 9000kg during peak hour traffic.

It seems a drastic step, but there's no denying that these heavy vehicles are a source of frustration for commuters. You've had a long day at work and just want to get home, but there's this big truck toiling along in front of you at 30km/h. The frustration builds and eventually drivers do something silly, perhaps resulting in a horrific accident.

As many accidents are caused by fatigue, it might not be a bad idea for long-haul truck drivers to be pulled off the roads for an hour or two, while the rest of us make our way home.

Now for the less brilliant ideas. The minister has proposed driver evaluation

as part of licence renewal, and cutting the speed limit to 40km/h in towns, 80km/h on rural roads and 100km/h on the highway.

Making a driver test part of the licence renewal is ridiculous, because it's targeting the wrong people. Anyone with a legitimate licence has already gone through the right steps, so why should he or she be punished for the sins of those who bought their licences, or drive around without even bothering to get one?

The real wrongdoer here is local government. Testing stations have become known for corruption, so the authorities should get their own house in order before subjecting motorists to unnecessary scrutiny. The proposed re-testing would also open up a new revenue stream for corrupt officials, who are the source of much of the problem in the first place.

The reduction of speed limits won't work. People don't stick to them now and a bunch of new limits will just be ignored like the current ones are. The only difference will be in the scale of the fines that will arrive on your doorstep a few weeks later. Instead of forking out R250 for driving at 131km/h in a 120km/h zone, you'll probably have to appear in front of a judge.

I rather like the idea of a 40km/h

limit in suburban areas, but again, it won't work because people will ignore it.

I'm not saying that speed isn't a factor in road safety, but speed always has to be combined with something else to cause an accident. Speed and a poorly maintained car, or speed and stupidity, for example. A modern, or well maintained car will happily sit at 140km/h all day long on the open road and – more importantly – would be able to haul itself to zero within a few seconds if needs be.

The effort it would take to enforce the new speed limits would be better spent in removing unroadworthy cars and drunken drivers from the road. Better yet, put some effort into educating road users on the three second following distance rule.

I try my best to keep that following distance whenever I'm behind the wheel but, unfortunately, here in Gauteng, that following distance usually ends up being a gap for some idiot weaving through the lanes on the highway.

If you think that lowering the speed limit is a good idea, ask yourself this: Would you rather be doing 100km/h on the highway in a poorly maintained car from the late 80s, or 140km/h in a brand-new BMW? **LW**

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FAST FEATURE  
PERFORMANCE SHOOT-OUT 2015

# BLASTED!

Seven SUVs and crossovers, on one track. A combined power output of 2065kW and 4004 Nm of torque. Three professional drivers on a closed circuit. One mission: decide which one of these machines really is the ultimate driver's SUV or crossover...

Text: Danie Botha Photography: Oliver Hirtenfelder



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## Performance. SUV.

Two words that have not traditionally fared brilliantly when used together in the same sentence to describe one vehicle.

Fast in a straight line, the hefty performance SUVs of a decade ago easily became flustered in a succession of tight corners, or if repeated emergency stops were required. Essentially, gravity and behemoth SUVs weighing the wrong side of two tons just don't gel when you start pushing the performance envelope.

More recently, though, as new technologies came to the fore and lighter materials became more readily available in the construction process, performance SUVs became much more than just straight-line bullies.

Nowadays some SUVs come with "track mode" and "race start launch control" and special performance settings for the engine and suspension. Some manufacturers even

claim that their SUVs not only feature a gimmicky "race" button but that they are fully track ready.

So you can, according to them, enter a bit of a race, and actually compete in it without scraping your elbows on the tar in the corners and ploughing through a wall when the brakes fail.

And the power. Oh boy, the power.

Some perspective: in 2000, Ferrari launched its 360 Modena, powered by a 3,6-litre V8 engine that produced 300kW. Lamborghini introduced its Gallardo V10 in 2003, and the original model had 368kW on tap. The latest BMW M3 produces 317kW, and a 2015 Ferrari 458 Italia has 419 kW.

But as impressive as these numbers are, they are less than some of the latest top performance SUVs.

Enter the BMW X5 M – one of the entries in

this competition. It has 423kW of power. The Mercedes G63 AMG's twin-turbo V8 produces 400kW. The small Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG crossover is driven by the most powerful four-cylinder production two-litre engine in the world, boasting 265kW.

And there's 344kW in the Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8, all naturally aspirated.

The numbers are staggering, as are the price tags.

But are the modern performance SUVs really any good? Are they still just straight-line bullies or can they actually deliver in the driver's department, too?

To find out we devised a cunning, two-pronged plan: first we'd settle the traffic light to traffic light argument by racing our seven performance SUVs and crossovers over the quarter-mile drag at Tarlton Raceway, west of Johannesburg. We also included a legendary



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## FAST FEATURE PERFORMANCE SHOOT-OUT 2015



The RSQ3 is everything you would expect from an Audi. It's luxurious, good looking and has a sumptuous interior. But once you push down hard on the throttle, it turns into a banshee, thanks to its epic five-cylinder turbocharged petrol powertrain.



included a high-speed "moose test" (emergency lane-change), a braking test (from about 160km/h) and a tour-de-traffic cone (or gymkhana) section where handling and grip and electronics could be put to the proper test. The drivers drove the vehicles for at least three laps, during which they could play with the

four-door performance sedan for interest's sake, as well as a highly modified SUV with a mind-blowing 520 kW of power.

And secondly, we asked three professional drivers (including some real racing legends) to drive each SUV and crossover on a 3km "circuit" at Tarlton Raceway where we

electronics and disable traction and stability and what-not controls at will.

For once we didn't bother with comfort, the effectiveness of the climate control, value for money and other such novelties. Instead, we simply asked our drivers to rate the vehicles from a pure driver's perspective.

We used a Formula One-style points system – 25 points for a "victory", all the way to six points for finishing in position number seven on the list.

This is... the 2015 Performance Shoot-out!

### The contenders (in alphabetical order)

#### Audi RS Q3

There is an engine sound that will leave most petrolheads with a tear in the eye. It's a sound

as distinctive as a tiger shark in the fish tank at the local pet store: the banshee wail of the turbocharged five-cylinder engine in the Group B Audi quattro rally cars of the eighties.

The Audi RS Q3 is also powered by a five-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine delivering 228kW of power and 420 Nm of torque – 4kW more than the original WRC Audi quattro rally car, which made its debut in 1980. There is also a big-bore tail pipe poking out from under the rear bumper. So in theory this RS Q3 quattro should provide its driver with plenty of tears-in-eyes moments.

And it does. That engine sounds like a refined version of the old rally car mill, with that distinctive five-cylinder wail, topped off with a discreet tjirp-tjirp from the turbocharger. The handling and grip, aided by the quattro system, are excellent too, and this crossover feels as "planted" as any performance hatch you care to bring to the party.

As is the case with all modern Audi cars, the cabin oozes class and sophistication.

There are a few chinks in the armour. Just like its forefather, the five-cylinder engine has some turbo lag. But make no mistake, once that turbo boosts, you have to hold on for dear life. And the lag is only obvious when you really push it on a gymkhana-style track. But it is there.

In this feature, pricing is not a point of criteria that will decide a winner or loser, but we do find the R752 000 a bit of a hard financial pill to swallow, especially considering that you don't get features like electrically adjustable front seats, which seem obligatory kit at this price.

For the rest, the RS Q3 is a really hot little crossover. And we – mostly – loved it.

### Vital stats – Audi RS Q3

Engine	2480cc, turbo five-cylinder
Power	228kW @ 5200r/min
Torque	420Nm @ 1500r/min
Gearbox	Seven-speed dual clutch S tronic
Tare weight	1620kg
Power to weight ratio	140 kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent quattro 4WD
Electronic aids	Traction/stability, launch control
Price	R752 000
Monthly instalments (approx)	R15 470

### Audi SQ5

What? A turbodiesel SUV in this competition? Oh yes!

The Audi SQ5 became the first diesel Audi to wear the revered "S" badge. This has been a rather controversial move in the world



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of “S”, where the legendary World Rally Championship Audi quattro legends ran only on high octane petrol, and definitely not on diesel fumes.

Some would say it would be like putting a vintage 1,6-litre twin-port VW Beetle motor in a Porsche 911, and calling it an “S”.

At face value, and even compared to other RS and S Audi models, the SQ5 looks decidedly tame and understated. Discreet “V6T” badges on the flanks hardly shout out twin-turbo V6 diesel with 230kW and 650Nm of torque. Nor does the SQ5 badge on the tail allude to the true capability of this machine.

Some punters, after driving the Audi, were surprised to hear that it was actually a diesel. That’s how sweetly this V6 revs. (This effect is helped along with some clever acoustics tricks to create a specific engine “ambience” in the cabin.) But even watching from the outside, the V6T sounds more like a petrol V6 than a diesel.

But it’s that 650Nm of torque, available from just 1450r/min, that is this “S” model’s coup d’état. The thrust from anything above idle speed is momentous, and instantaneous. Boot this Audi out of a slow corner and a combination of the quattro drivetrain and that torque launches the SQ5 forward in a most impressive manner.

We’d had some reservations about including the diesel Audi in this test, but the SQ5 impressed everyone who drove it.

#### Vital stats – Audi SQ5

Engine	2967cc, V6 twin-turbo diesel
Power	230kW @ 3900r/min
Torque	650Nm @ 1450r/min
Gearbox	Eight-speed Tiptronic
Tare weight	1885kg
Power to weight ratio	122 kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent quattro 4WD
Electronic aids	Traction/stability, launch control
Price	R867 000
Monthly instalments (approx)	R17 820



The SQ5 was the only diesel-powered vehicle in the shoot-out. Not much was expected from it, but at the end of the day we had to check its times repeatedly to make sure we hadn’t missed something. If you still believe petrol is best, take a long, hard look at this one!



#### BMW X5 M

The Bavarian company’s first “fast” X5 was the 4.8is. This SUV’s 4,8-litre V8 engine produced a whopping 265kW of power and revved to an amazing 7000r/min – back in 2002. Since then there have been a number of “fast” X5 derivatives, the most notable in recent times being the M50d, powered by a straight-six turbodiesel that develops 280 kW and 740 Nm. Impressive? Sure it is.

But those numbers pale in comparison to the new BMW X5 M – the most complete “fast” X5 to date. Its twin-turbocharged V8 petrol engine has 423kW and 750Nm of torque available. 423kW!

But this BMW is about so much more than just straight line speed. The suspension, steering, brakes, tyres and electronics are all significantly beefed up and adjusted to endow this “M” with astonishing dynamics in the corners, too. Although few owners will actually test BMW’s claim that this SUV is fully track-ready, we reckon it would



probably be quite the track-day weapon. Just imagine overtaking that tweaked Golf GTi at Zwartkops on the outside, in a fast sweep!

Frankly, this BMW represents a new tier in the hierarchy of performance SUVs. But here’s the thing. The very same SUV that is so fast is still an SUV, and a very comfortable and luxurious one at that. So if you drive it in a sedate fashion (admittedly this is quite a challenge), it’s a perfectly practical runabout for the family.

But bury that hammer, and you (and the family) had better hold on. Oh boy, you’d better hold on!



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## FAST FEATURE PERFORMANCE SHOOT-OUT 2015



The X5 M is the meanest, angriest SUV we've ever encountered. It hurls itself at the horizon at an amazing speed.



### Vital stats – BMW X5 M

Engine	4395cc, twin-turbo V8
Power	423kW @ 6000r/min
Torque	750Nm @ 2200r/min
Gearbox	Eight-speed automatic
Tare weight	2215kg
Power to weight ratio	191kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent xDrive
Electronic aids	Traction/stability, launch control
Price	R1 657 159
Monthly instalments (approx)	R33 970

### Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT

The Jeep SRT is the rebel of this lot. As the only naturally aspirated performance SUV in the line-up, it essentially offers a middle finger to the turbocharged clan, relying on good old cubic capacity to muster some impressive

horsepower numbers.

The 6,4-litre HEMI V8 engine has 344kW and 624Nm of torque, and revs in a most satisfying manner to 7000r/min. In fact, this engine thrives on high revs, and in that range it sounds like a Nascar, racing at the sharp end of the field.

All in all, the SRT8 is a bit of a ruffian. Compared to its highly efficient and mostly Teutonic competition, kitted out in efficient white lab jackets, the Jeep is like a burly mechanic with chest hair poking through the too-open jacket, rounded off with ham-fisted boxing stance and a bit of a foul mouth.

And we love it! One can't fault the Teutonic brilliance of the other vehicles, but there is something special about man-handling this brute around a gymkhana course.

In the SRT application, Jeep removed the low-range option and instead features a choice between various driving modes including Auto, Sport and Track. The latter setting, combined with no traction control, sends more power to the rear wheels, so you can actually powerslide this beast around a gymkhana track.

The Grand Cherokee SRT – the most

powerful Jeep ever produced – handles and stops quite brilliantly. It's a surprisingly accomplished all-rounder.

All we can say is... long live the beast!

### Vital stats – Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT

Engine	6417cc, V8 Hemi
Power	344kW @ 6250r/min
Torque	624Nm @ 4100r/min
Gearbox	Eight-speed auto
Tare weight	2340kg
Power to weight ratio	147kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent
Electronic aids	Traction/stability, track mode, launch control
Price	R1 099 990
Monthly instalments (approx)	R22 582

### Lexus NX200t F-Sport

When Lexus launched the striking NX range in SA and there was mention of an "F-Sport" model in the line-up, there were a few John Travolta dance moves (as in the film *Pulp Fiction*) in the *Leisure Wheels* office. But the excitement was short-lived when we realised that all the NX200t derivatives were powered by the same two-litre engine, delivering exactly the same amount of power and torque (175kW and 350Nm). However, after some research we realised that the F-Sport may not be "useless" in the performance department after all.

*Au contraire.*

This model is equipped with Lexus's Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), which "electronically monitors and adapts the suspension damping and steering to ensure optimal handling and ride depending on driving conditions". Other F-Sport touches include "cosmetic appendages" such as black exterior mirrors, G-Force and turbo boost gauges, paddle shifters (for the six-shooter Auto) and special front seats with enhanced bolsters.

The two-litre engine is a modern marvel. Essentially, the direct-injection four-pot features the world's first combination of a cylinder head with an integrated water-cooled exhaust manifold and a twin-scroll turbo. Although 175kW and 350Nm may not seem much, especially not in this company, it's the linear power and torque delivery that is really impressive.

So this Lexus is at the sharpest end of automotive technology and it looks pretty good, too. But would our drivers appreciate the technology or would they find it decidedly humdrum on the 3km track?





### Vital stats – Lexus NX200t F-Sport

Engine	1998cc, turbo four-cylinder
Power	175kW @ 4800r/min
Torque	350Nm @ 1650r/min
Gearbox	Six-speed auto
Tare weight	1750kg
Power to weight ratio	100kW/ton
Drivetrain	Electronic 4WD
Electronic aids	Traction/stability plus Sport/ Sport+ mode
Price	R659 900
Monthly instalments (approx)	R13 587

### Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG

The GLA45 AMG is driven by the most powerful four-cylinder production engine in the world, yet it also represents an anomaly in this segment. Here's why: first Mercedes created the GLA crossover, which is based on the A-Class hatch and clearly aimed at the fashion-conscious customer who wants to buy into the populist crossover segment. It features slightly manned-up styling and plastics, and a slightly increased ride height. Which is all according to the crossover script.

But then Mercedes decided to create an AMG version of the crossover. So they dropped the suspension down to lower than A-Class levels, beefed up the suspension and brakes accordingly, and added low-profile rubber. So this GLA has gone full circle: it started as a hatch, mutated into a crossover, then mutated back into a hatch with a 265kW engine and no inclination for even dirt roads.

But let's not dwell on the form and function of the GLA45 AMG – let's look at the numbers that really count here. It has 265kW of power and 450Nm of torque, channelled to all four wheels via Merc's 4Matic system. It also has a seven-speed dual clutch gearbox as well as a sports suspension and steering system that is tuned for handling (and not rocks). So from a performance vehicle perspective, the good-looking GLA ticks a lot of "Yes please!" boxes.

However, racing drivers are not easily



The Grand Cherokee SRT, with its old-school 6,4-litre engine, was a pleasure to watch on the gymkhana course. It was the contender most willing to "get its tail out".



impressed by mere numbers. They deal in cornering speed, feedback, controllability, braking and other such performance matters. And to be frank, we had our doubts about whether this GLA45 would impress them on the dynamic track.

### Vital stats – Mercedes GLA45 AMG

Engine	1991cc, turbo four-cylinder
Power	265kW @ 6000r/min
Torque	450Nm @ 2250r/min
Gearbox	Seven-speed dual clutch
Tare weight	1585kg
Power to weight ratio	167kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent 4MATIC
Electronic aids	Traction/stability and launch control
Price	R790 843
Monthly instalments (approx)	R16 264

### Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG

Picture the scene: take one 1971 Toyota Land Cruiser. Add plenty of expensive leather to the interior, throw in a fancy infotainment system and maybe some seat coolers (because seat warmers are so last year). Next, find a P51 Mustang fighter plane (from the Second World War) and extract its 1500



horsepower Merlin V12 engine, and shoehorn it into the Cruiser's engine bay.

This is basically what AMG did with the Merc G63: The G-Wagon base is a hardcore 4x4 with solid axles and three lockers and a design that basically dates back to the seventies. But there's a modern, twin-turbocharged V8 engine under the bonnet that delivers a seemingly stupid 400kW of power. That's 540 horsepower!

The mention of the Mustang was not coincidental. With its AMG sports exhaust, this G63 sounds angry, upset and... brilliant. With the 5,5-litre V8 spitting fire and growling and screaming, the two turbos hissing and tjirping, the G63 is best driven with the windows open so you can take it all in.

And it is fast! With a 0-100km/h time of less than six seconds, in-gear acceleration that will warp your mind, and a top speed limited to

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The Lexus NX F-Sport was way down on power compared to its rivals, but in terms of refinement, it came out tops. It's slightly clinical, but it makes a very good case for itself if you're after a relatively fast SUV with all the latest gadgets.



Gearbox	Seven-speed auto
Tare weight	2550kg
Power to weight ratio	156kW/ton
Drivetrain	Permanent 4WD, low range, 3 lockers
Electronic aids	Traction/stability control
Price	R2 131 625
Monthly instalments (approx)	R43 667

Oy fey! The big fishes that got away...

No performance test would be complete without a Porsche, and we had two models lined up for this feature. The first was the new Porsche Macan S, powered by a three-litre twin-turbo V6 petrol engine that delivers 250kW and 460Nm (at just 1450r/min). The second was a Porsche Cayenne Turbo with 382kW and 750Nm of torque. Both these Porsches, we reckon, would have ranked at the sharp end of the results.

Unfortunately, both models earmarked for the test were sold a couple of weeks before the event, and with units in short supply, that was that.

Another new player is the mighty Range Rover Sport SVR, which has 405kW and 680Nm. However, the new SVR is available only on special import and there was already a backlog of customers waiting for their cars. So we had a better chance of getting

an interview with the man in the moon than getting a press unit to test.

And the last obvious omission on our wish list was the Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG. Although Mercedes-Benz SA occasionally do have a vehicle like this available, our luck was out this time round, and we were limited to the GLA45 AMG and G63 AMG.

### It's a traffic light dice!

This test's aim was simple: race each vehicle over the quarter-mile at Tarlton Raceway. This 402m drag was designed to simulate a typical traffic light to traffic light sprint – the most extreme test that owners of SUVs and crossovers like these are likely to put their rides through.

We added a Subaru WRX STi to the mix as a reference point for a typical performance sedan, as well as RGMotorsport's supercharged Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT – with 520kW under the right foot! This is how it went down:

### 9 Lexus NX200t F-Sport 15,68sec/142,7km/h

Okay, so here horses for courses counted against the cool Lexus NX. With "only" 175kW of power, it managed a time of 15,68sec. It also did it in what was described as the most refined and comfortable manner – the refinement of the Lexus drivetrain and cabin really are impressive. It launched off the line efficiently and without wheel spin as the electronic 4WD system sorted out the details. A solid if slightly clinical overall performance.

### 8 Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG 15,24sec/154,6km/h

The little Benz features a cool launch control system which combines the ideal amount of power versus engine revs versus road conditions versus clutch engagement. However, despite our best efforts and numerous attempts to get the system to engage, the GLA's computer brain would have none of it, so we had to "launch" the Benz the old-fashioned way. The turbo lag off the line counted against it, resulting in a disappointing sprint time. If the launch control system had engaged, we would most certainly have been talking about a 14 second time.

### 7 Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT 14,26sec/156,1km/h

Despite losing out in the power game in the thin Highveld air against its turbocharged rivals, the naturally aspirated SRT proved to

210km/h (thankfully), the G63 is the one SUV in this line-up that makes absolutely no practical sense. And there is also the small matter of price... R2,1-million is no small change!

Yet it represents a beautiful, intoxicating blend of nonsensical automotive pleasure that words can hardly describe.

Would the 2,5-ton G63 be able to combine its 400kW of raw, beautiful power with sufficient handling and braking ability to impress our drivers?

### Vital stats – Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG

Engine	Twin-turbo V8
Power	400kW @ 5500r/min
Torque	760Nm @ 2000r/min





be really quick out of the blocks, setting a very competitive time. Tipping the scale at 2340kg, the Jeep is no lightweight. But thanks to its launch control and plenty of cubic inches, the most powerful production Jeep ever blasted through the quarter-mile beam in 14,26sec – with a beautiful aural track to boot.

## 6 Audi SQ5

14,12sec/157,1km/h

The turbodiesel Audi raised a few eyebrows after its sprint. It surprised friend and foe alike with a 14,12sec time. The SQ5's main party trick is the 650Nm of torque, which is available from just 1450r/min. Floor the go-faster pedal, and the response is an immediate shove in the backside as this Audi hunts down the horizon. And while it chases the line it's all very calm and collected in the cabin. A real turn-up for the books, then!

## 5 Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG

13,79sec/166,1km/h

Launching 2,5-tons off the line, accompanied by thunder and mayhem and the kind of sound effects that will be mentioned around camp fires for many decades to come, the G63 seems to defy all gravity laws as the brick-like shape hurtles forward. It even manages some tail-wagging wheel spin as all of that 400kW and 760Nm of torque is channelled through the chassis. Although the time of 13,79sec was not the fastest, the G63 put up the best show – no doubt about that!

## 4 Audi RS Q3

13,54sec/158,2km/h

In the impressive case of the RS Q3, horsepower, torque and launch control combined in a most decisive display of a quick getaway. With the electronics keeping the five-cylinder engine ticking over in the perfect range, the Audi RS Q3 blasted off the line in a perfect manner, and it set a blistering time of 13,54sec. The launch control really worked its magic to circumvent the inherent turbo lag. A really impressive traffic light to traffic light blaster!

## 3 Subaru WRX STi

13,52sec/159,0km/h

Flying the flag for the performance sedans of the world, the four-wheel drive Subaru WRX STi did a grand job with a time of 13,52sec, beating the RS Q3 by a whisker. The latest STi has grown in size over previous versions, but Subaru has managed to keep the weight down to a reasonable 1500kg. It is powered by the



The Mercedes GLA 45 AMG had some surprises for the test crew. Because of problems with its launch control system, it didn't set a good time on the drag strip, but it clawed its way back with some serious points on the track.



older generation 2,5-litre four-cylinder Boxer engine with 221kW and 407Nm of torque. It was the only vehicle in this test with a manual gearbox (a six-shooter).

Traction off the line is extremely impressive, but compared to all the SUVs and crossovers in this test, the ride and drive is a combination of edgy dynamics and a hard ride. As the sprint time suggests, the STi is plenty fast, but as a daily driver it's uncompromising and hard. A real hardcore machine then, aimed at hardcore performance car drivers.

## 2 RGMotorsport Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT

12,77sec/174,6km/h

Running a 12sec quarter-mile is a pipedream for the owners of many performance hatches and sedans, but for a hefty SUV to run a sub-13 second time is rather special. Enter the RGMotorsport Jeep SRT. This supercharged beast delivers 520kW of power at 6000r/min and a mammoth 1000Nm torque at 5000r/min!

This specific SRT is equipped with the older generation five-speed automatic gearbox, but it nevertheless managed an amazing time of 12,77sec. But here's the real punch line: You can



pick up a 2013 Jeep SRT with low mileage for around R600 000. Then you take it to RGM and spend another R200 000 on the supercharger conversion. So for about R800 000 you can park a 520kW super-SUV in your garage. Now there's food for thought!

## 1 BMW X5 M

12,42sec/182,7km/h

Speechless. Breathless. And a little bit scared. That was the reaction of the driver who piloted the BMW X5 M on the quarter-mile drag. It is staggeringly fast. With 423kW of power and 750Nm of torque, the twin-turbo V8 propels the BMW, weighing 2,2 tons, from standstill to 402m in just 12,42sec (at a terminal speed of 182,7km/h). And remember, the X5 is stock standard, just like the one Joe Public will drive off the showroom floor!

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Watching the G63 complete a lap of the gymkhana course was a bit like watching a Trevor Noah show – hysterical! If the competition had been about noise only, the G63 would have won hands down.



Audi SQ5	14,12sec/157,1km/h
Jeep SRT8	14,26sec/156,1km/h
Mercedes GLA45 AMG	15,24sec/154,6km/h
Lexus NX200t F-Sport	15,68sec/142,7km/h

### Is that a moooose in the road?

Time to get down to the real business of this test.

Going fast in a straight line is one thing, but being fast in a straight line and offering excellent handling and stopping and feedback and smile-a-minute dynamics – that's a whole different kettle of SUV.

So we devised a 3km long track for our three professional drivers: Hannes Grobler, Duncan Vos and Daniel Barbosa.

We included a high speed (160km/h) emergency lane change test (or moose test) and the track also included some high-speed sections, an emergency brake test and a tight and slippery gymkhana.

We did not time any laps. The idea was rather for our star drivers to experiment with electronic control systems and braking points and so on over three laps, in each vehicle.

They drove all the vehicles back-to-back, in the same conditions. Unlike in other comparisons, we did not ask them to complete intricate and detailed score sheets about ventilation vent effectiveness or affordability, or the finish of the paint. We simply asked

them to rate the vehicles in order of pure driving pleasure, from the best to the worst. In other words, if they were sent on an errand to the 24-hour shop at 2am to get a can of bully beef, which vehicle would make them run to the garage, jump in with a smile, and even take a 10km detour to the shop?

For once we didn't care about price, or about practicality, or any such matters.

The points work the same way as in Formula One: 25 points for a "victory", 18 points for second, and so on. In the event of a tie, the results of the quarter-mile sprint would decide the final rankings.

So without further ado, let's get this section started... and we kick it off with a short introduction to our three drivers.

### And the winners are...

After tallying up all the scores, and interviewing each driver after each drive (and learning a few car dynamic terms along the way!), we can announce the results of the inaugural Performance feature:

#### 7th Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG 18 points

Crikey! The big Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG did not impress our star drivers in the least! Although they seemed to enjoy the 400kW in a straight line, they found the rest of the performance package lacking.

We still reckon the G6 AMG put on the best "wow" display when it came to sound effects and drama... pity about the corners.

#### The verdicts

"It still feels like an old Gelandewagen. It's cramped on the inside. It has nice power, but it didn't impress me. A poser's performance SUV." – Hannes Grobler.

"My right arm must have a roast from scraping on the tar! It has so much body lean in the corners!" – Daniel Barbosa.

"It's got so much power! But it can't back that up in the corners or under braking." – Duncan Vos.

#### 6th Lexus NX200t F-Sport 31 points

The Lexus may have less than half the horses of the G63, but it still managed to beat the big Benz in the points race – and it finished just four points adrift of the RS Q3. It proved to be one of the best all-rounders in the chassis department, providing a supple and comfy ride when not pressing on, and pretty good handling when you put the hammer down in

the BMW when it is driven at speed in a straight line. In the cabin you can listen to your favourite classical track in a completely unflustered, undramatic environment. And this is while the world around the X5 M is warped into a different time zone.

The BMW is then, without doubt, the winner of the quarter-mile drag. And by a long way, too. It is a brilliant machine in a straight line. Surely it can't be as good in the corners? Surely not?

#### In a nutshell – quarter-mile drag results

BMW X5 M	12,42sec/182,7km/h
RGM Jeep SRT8	12,77sec/174,6km/h
Subaru Impreza STi	13,52sec/159,0km/h
Audi RS Q3	13,54sec/158,2km/h
Mercedes G63 AMG	13,79sec/166,1km/h





the corners. Considering the competition, the Lexus did pretty well.

#### The verdicts

"Not as powerful as the rest, but the comfort and handling make it a very nice package." – Duncan Vos.

"It's very quiet and refined, but it obviously doesn't have the power of the others." – Hannes Grobler.

"Very refined and fast enough for most requirements, but not the kind of performance vehicle that leaves me with sweaty palms." – Daniel Barbosa.

### 5 – Audi RS Q3

35 points

With that beautiful five-cylinder banshee wail, and the traction offered by the quattro four-wheel drive system, the RS Q3 clearly put a smile on most of our drivers' faces. Handling and power were highlights, but there were a few chinks in the RS's armour. Most notable was the turbo lag on the tight gymkhana course, which was all the more apparent when it was driven to the limit by the expert drivers. Overall, though, the little Audi earned enough points to clinch fifth position.

#### The verdicts

"Now I understand why Sarel van der Merwe



was always so fast in his quattro... this thing is quick, and that engine sounds awesome! It's a nice toy..." – Hannes Grobler.

"It feels more like a car to me. I'm very impressed." – Duncan Vos.

"The handling was phenomenal. The engine sound is spectacular. But if you want an immediate response, you have to use it in manual mode" – Daniel Barbosa.

### 4th Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT

43 points

The naturally aspirated Jeep SRT seemed to

polarise opinions. Some drivers loved it while others thought it was just so-so. All three agreed that the handling was a surprise, and we will remember for a long time how they managed to make the 2,2-ton Grand "dance" that gymkhana course, flicking it around like a Golf GTi. And the sound of that high-revving 6,4-litre V8 Hemi impressed everyone, too.

#### The verdicts

"I couldn't believe the Jeep handled so well considering how much it weighs. The power is unbelievable. The traction control is also very good." – Hannes Grobler.

#### Hannes Grobler – the legend returns!

After spending some time in hospital in 2014, legendary racer Hannes Grobler returned to the race track for this feature. His pedigree is a coveted one, and he is still the only SA driver to have won the national rally and off-road championships in the same year. Grobler also competed in the African edition of the Dakar Rally Raid in a Renault racing truck. Other accolades include numerous circuit racing titles as well as many national off-road victories and titles. Grobler retired from the

national racing scene in 2012, but he clearly has not lost any speed, judging by the way he attacked the gymkhana course.

#### Duncan Vos – the champ rides again!

Vos won the SA Formula GTi championship in 1993, and between 1997 and 2000 he and team-mate Giniel de Villiers ruled the SA Touring Car championship in their all-conquering 220kW Nissan Primers. After Nissan pulled out of circuit racing, Vos moved with the team to off-road racing, and after

many wins in Nissan Navaras, he and team boss Glyn Hall joined Toyota when Nissan pulled out of motorsport.

In 2012, Vos won the SA off-road championship in a Class SP Toyota Hilux, and the same year he competed in the South American Dakar Rally, finishing 10th overall.

Vos retired from the national off-road scene in 2013, but he keeps his racing sword sharp by competing in the sports car class.

#### Daniel Barbosa – the young gun!

Although he has no racing titles behind his name, petrolhead Daniel Barbosa can boast a decade worth of advanced driving instruction on his resumé. Daniel has instructed thousands of motorists on how to drive, be that sideways, fast or slow. That includes a stint of rally driving instruction.

Nowadays Barbosa is a corporate animal in the land of tyres at Bridgestone SA, so his opinion in this test not only represents that of a highly advanced driver but also of a young corporate executive (with a family) who may be in the market for a hot-blooded SUV or crossover.



The three professional drivers, from the left: Hannes Grobler, Duncan Vos and Daniel Barbosa.

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"Immediate performance, awesome braking and it gives you that awe inspiring feeling. I'll probably say this a thousand times – it's the best sounding car here today." – Daniel Barbosa.

"Fast in a straight line, and surprisingly nimble in the corners, too" – Duncan Vos.

### 3rd Audi SQ5

45 points

When we tallied the points, we re-counted the Audi SQ5's score – three times. Surely it couldn't be this good? A turbodiesel SUV beating a hairy-chested Jeep, a thundering 400kW G-wagon and a very brisk Audi RS Q3? Indeed!

The 230kW Audi's performance surprised everyone, not least our star drivers, who raved about all the torque that is available just above idling speeds. We thought of the SQ5 as a fast and powerful long distance machine, but our drivers (with their racing caps on) jabbered on about the Audi's blasting power out of the slow, tight corners. The refinement and feel of the SQ5 also impressed them.

So there you have it: the diesel Audi SQ5 managed to kick some sand in the eyes of pretty serious and awesome petrol hardware.

#### The verdicts

"The complete package; fast, great handling and refined. In most of these cars you have to use the manual override to keep the car in the gear you want, but you can leave the SQ5 in drive and it's always in the right gear. Very responsive." – Daniel Barbosa.

"It's really surprisingly fast, and it hardly sounds like a diesel at all!" – Duncan Vos.

"The torque is impressive. The slow and tight corners on the gymkhana course only highlighted how fast the SQ5 is out of the blocks, with the quattro drive and all that torque." – Hannes Grobler.



Checking the tyre pressures was vital throughout the day.

### 2nd Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG

55 points

And here's another surprise! The hatch that became a crossover that became a hatch impressed our professional drivers no end on the 3km track, with especially the handling and the bags of power from the two-litre engine ticking a lot of "right" boxes.

In Sport mode, the twin exhausts snap, crackle and pop during changes, and if you keep the engine on the boil with the paddle shifters, it really offers the most authentic "race car" driving experience in this line-up. The Benz may be flawed in many other areas (such as interior space, practicality and actual crossover application on dirt roads), but seen as a driver's car where nothing else matters, the GLA45 AMG had enough firepower to impress our tough-to-please drivers.

#### The verdicts:

"Fantastic package. Handling, power, comfort and looks." – Duncan Vos.

"Of all the small cars it's the best as far as handling is concerned. It makes a delightful crackling sound when shifting up or down. It's one of the best cars I've driven today." – Hannes Grobler.

"One of the best handling cars in the test. Slight delay in power (turbo lag), but the steering is very direct." – Daniel Barbosa.

### 1st BMW X5 M

55 points

We have a points tie for first place! But thanks to its blistering performance on the quarter-mile drag, the BMW X5 M is our number one performance SUV for 2015.

With 423kW on tap, it was always going to be fast in a straight line. However, it was way faster than we could have imagined, obliterating the time of the 520kW RGMotorsport Jeep Grand Cherokee.

That 12,4sec, by way of comparison, is in the same league as a Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale, a Porsche 911 GT3, a BMW M6 and a Dodge Viper V10. It has moved the goalposts in straight line speed ability in the SUV class. Comprehensively.

But then our drivers took the wheel on our 3km track, and they couldn't stop singing the praises of the handling, the brakes, the torque, the gearbox, the steering, the sound of the thing, and the comfort.

It is very much the most complete performance SUV in this test. By far.

#### The verdicts

"This one is angry! For sure, the most fun I've had today. I like the fact that the traction control stays off, which allows you to control the car with the throttle. It's unbelievably sporty." – Hannes Grobler.

"This BMW wipes every single car here off the map!" – Daniel Barbosa.

"Very fast, very powerful and it handles very well. Quite a big car, but a fantastic package." – Duncan Vos.



### Gerhard Horn's wish list

Choosing my top three from these magnificent machines was probably the toughest thing I've had to do as a motor journalist. I spent an entire weekend changing my mind countless times, but this is the verdict I've come up with.

If driving pleasure hadn't been the sole consideration, I'd have the Audi SQ5 in a heartbeat. It does everything perfectly and it's frugal. After the testing, every one of the cars was close to drained, but the SQ5 still had more than three-quarters of its tank left. The SQ5 is, quite simply, a staggering achievement.

As for choosing a top three based on driving



Left: The Subaru WRX STI came along as the yardstick for more traditional performance motoring. Right: The *Leisure Wheels* sales team were invited to ride shotgun with the professional drivers. Their nerves were a bit frazzled, but they survived!







The drag times were set with Gerhard Horn and GG van Rooyen behind the wheel, using Tarlton's professional timing equipment. On the left is GG in the X5M, who clawed out a convincing lead over Gerhard in the G63. On the right the duo are about to set off in the GLA 45 AMG and RSQ3. GG and the RSQ3 gave Gerhard and his AMG another hiding.

pleasure, I'd put the Jeep Cherokee SRT third, the X5 M second and the G63 in first place.

It sounds strange, given the comments of the professional drivers, but my definition of driving pleasure differs from theirs. They commented on handling, acceleration and driving, but I derive most pleasure from how I feel behind the wheel.

The SRT remains one of my favourite cars and the X5M is a laugh-out-loud kind of fast, but the G63 made me feel great every time I drove it. The combination of the tank-like looks and that glorious V8 burble won me over completely. I couldn't care less that it handles like a drunken elephant. It won my heart, and at the end of the day that's all that really matters to me.



#### GG van Rooyen's wish list

I would give the bronze medal to the Mercedes-Benz G63. It is as aerodynamic as a brick outhouse, it isn't terribly fast in a straight

line and it corners about as well as a three-legged buffalo. But the G63 is the only "proper" 4x4 in this company. With low-range gearing and three diff locks, it would trounce any other performance SUV when it came to the rough stuff. Add to this a glorious soundtrack and a timeless design that turns heads wherever it goes, and I think the G63 deserves a place in the medals. No other performance SUV out there is quite like it.

The silver medal goes to the Audi SQ5. It isn't the fastest 4x4 but it is, I think, probably the easiest to

live with. It is certainly the least showy and shouty of the bunch. It doesn't advertise its abilities – no silly stripes, badges or paint options here.

And it is even powered by an oilburner! But don't let all of this fool you. The SQ5 is a wolf in sheep's clothing – a true driver's car masquerading as a family SUV.

Gold goes to the X5 M. It is more than an SUV. It is proof of what humanity is capable of as a species. It doesn't just provide thrills, it offers hope for the future. If we can build an SUV that weighs close to 2500kg yet rockets from 0-100 m/h in 4,2 seconds, why can't we also turn this whole "global warming" thing around, colonise Mars and build the hoverboard from Back to the Future?

The X5 M makes a mockery of the laws of physics. Here is a hulking SUV that handles and accelerates like a sportscar. It is more dynamic than it has any right to be. The X5 M makes all the other performance SUVs seem just a little bit tame.



#### Danie Botha's wish list

A performance car is about more than just pure speed, mega kilowatts, or how much cornering Gs can be achieved.

Sure, one can probably never have quite enough kilowatts (although the X5 M seems like a reasonable cut-off point!), but it's also about the sound effects, the steering feedback, the way the front seat fits, the gearbox or paddle shift action, and so on.

So it's more of a visceral, emotional experience. And for me the three SUVs that managed to stir my soul were the BMW X5 M, the Audi RS Q3 and the Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG.

Okay, so the G63 AMG with its 400kW is pretty silly, but "silly" has never been as good as those four AMG pipes bellowing thunder, scaring old people and children alike. It really is a thing of automotive bliss. Never mind the rest of the G63 – it is dynamically flawed in many ways. But this is the best that "silly" has ever sounded.

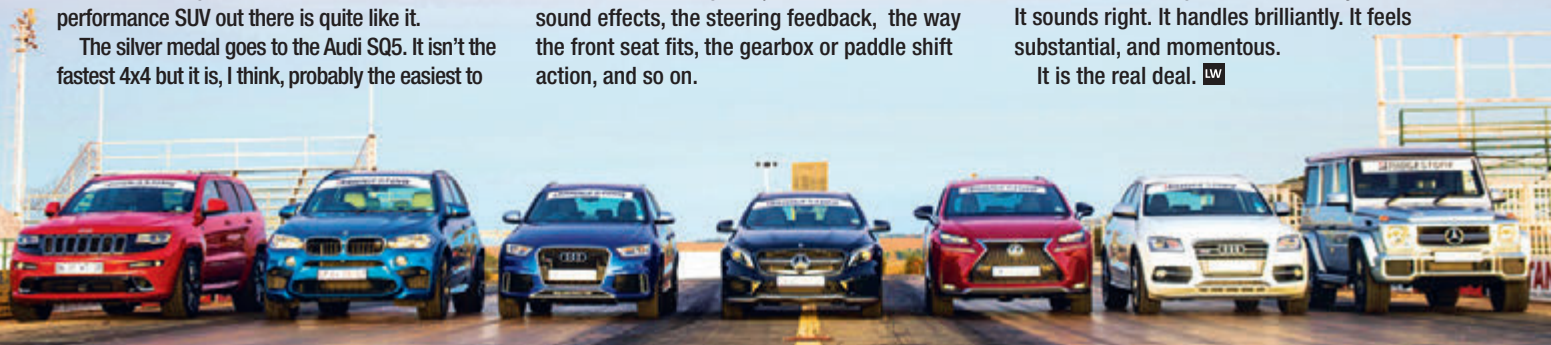
Like the G63, the Audi RS Q3 stirred me mostly because of its sound track. That unmistakable five-cylinder banshee wail led me to look up some old Audi quattro rally videos on the internet – it's the stuff of goosebumps.

Other highlights included the steering wheel – a nifty little flat-bottomed three-spoke number that felt just right. The front seats were also pretty cool, and the optional alloy wheels certainly looked good, too. Still, it lacked a certain... something.

Ahem, the BMW X5 M. Clearly it was super fast. Clearly it handled well. And I resisted driving it until the performance shoot-out was done.

Within a few hundred metres I knew exactly why it had won this contest. It's the sum of the X5 that is so impressive. Yes, it rewrites the power and speed rulebook for SUVs, but it is also a driver's car par excellence. It just fits. It sounds right. It handles brilliantly. It feels substantial, and momentous.

It is the real deal. **LW**



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# The coolest Chery you've ever seen

We've just taken delivery of the new Chery Tiggo, but unlike our other long-termers, this one won't be kept in stock standard mode

**Text:** Gerhard Horn

**We weren't planning** on tackling a project vehicle in 2015. For once, our long-term fleet was to remain stock standard, which meant we'd be able to comment on their capabilities in standard format, as most people would buy them off the showroom floor.

Then the new Chery Tiggo crossed our path. It arrived one dreary Wednesday afternoon last month and it stood in the parking lot for a few days while we figured out what exactly to do with it.

Then the Renault Captur arrived. With the two cars parked next to each other, we started making some comparisons, since they

cost about the same amount of money.

The Tiggo is bigger than the Renault, and this is a massive advantage when it comes to transporting a family and their luggage, but then again, the Captur is a lot more interesting. That gave us the answer to our question about what to do with the Tiggo.

The Chinese vehicle is at a slight disadvantage because it's not as cool as its main rivals. For the same amount of cash, you could buy a Captur or a Citroën C4 Cactus.

The French cars ooze cool. Both can be ordered in a wide range of funky colours, including orange and brown. There are just five colour options for the Tiggo, including exciting shades like black, white and red.

The Tiggo isn't cool, but over the course of the next few months we'll be doing our best to transform it into something that's as cool as the Cactus, the current yardstick for coolness.

To be honest, Chery has already helped us get halfway there by including a number of stylish and aggressive design features on

the recently face-lifted Tiggo. In standard specification, it comes with 17-inch alloy wheels, daytime running lights and a tailgate-mounted spare wheel.

We have no plans to fiddle with the undercarriage or engine. The Tiggo is and always will be a soft-roader, because it is front-wheel drive only. The 1,6-litre four-cylinder engine, while producing enough power to make the Tiggo a perfectly adequate daily drive, would also struggle if we added too much weight. So we'll be focusing on turning the exterior into something icy cool and the interior into a place that you wouldn't want to leave.

To help us in this endeavour, we've approached a few aftermarket specialists. These companies, to be named later, will transform the humble Chery into a head-turning set of wheels.

As for the interior, we're not sure of our plans yet, but only because the standard car is already handsomely equipped. The list includes Bluetooth connectivity, a decent sound-system with a USB jack, rear park distance control and remote central locking. Passenger safety is taken care of by dual airbags, Isofix anchors, ESP and ABS with electronic brake distribution.

With the Tiggo costing R230 000, there's still a massive price gap we can play with when you compare the car to some top-end compact crossovers.

We can't go into details yet, but we are confident the result will be the coolest Tiggo the world has ever seen! Watch this space. **LW**





## LONG TERM TEST SUBARU OUTBACK

**Our beloved Kermit** green XV has gone back to Subaru, but luckily the gap it left in our parking lot was soon filled by a brand-new Outback long-term.

Our time behind the wheel has been rather limited so far, because of a host of other activities, but we can already tell that this car is going to be an absolute joy to live with.

The most notable change from the previous-generation Outback is the increase of interior space. The body is 20mm wider than before, which makes a big difference to the overall usable space on the inside. Subaru has also increased the boot capacity to 512 litres with all seats in place and 1 801 litres when the rear seats are folded down.

While we were big fans of the previous model, we can't help but think this new Outback is a massive step forward.

It's loaded with all the latest technology,

including dual-zone climate control, two USB ports, a touch-screen interface, Bluetooth connectivity and a 12-speaker Harmon Kardon sound system.

Our long-term test vehicle is equipped with the famous 2,5-litre four-cylinder Boxer engine, which is mated to a CVT transmission. Not only is it a deeply relaxing and refined car to drive, but Subaru says we should be able to achieve a combined fuel consumption figure of just 7,7 l/100km.

The engine is a peach. It produces 129kW and 235Nm of torque, which is more than enough power for everyday use.

We haven't had a chance to drive this particular model off-road yet, but if our soft-roader adventure in the 3,6-litre derivative in the May 2015 edition was anything to go by, it should do rather well.

All Outback models come standard with

Subaru's symmetrical all-wheel drive system and an X-mode, which is activated by a dial. The system provides maximum traction in rough conditions. Couple that to an impressive ground-clearance of 213mm and you have a pretty decent off-roader that can go far off the beaten track.

As the Outback is essentially a family vehicle, we are happy with its safety credentials. Not only has it scored the full five stars from Euro NCAP, but the Japan New Car Assessment Programme recently awarded it five stars for safety as well.

The only problem we have at the moment is deciding who should drive it home for the night!

We look forward to the Outback's time with us and will give readers a comprehensive report on how it fares in an upcoming edition. **LW**

– Gerhard Horn

# Out with the old, in with the new

A new Subaru Outback recently joined the *Leisure Wheels* long-term fleet. So far, it's been a joy to live with





# A bakkie worth waiting for



The all-new Hilux will be launched early next year. It's been a long time coming, but it seems as if it will be worth the wait

Text: Gerhard Horn

**Even though we** have a performance shoot-out elsewhere in this magazine featuring around R8-million worth of the most expensive and exclusive machines in SA, we're willing to bet that you flipped directly to this page before reading anything else!

The launch of an all-new Hilux is an auspicious occasion to say the least. It will be, without doubt, the most important new vehicle of 2016.

So far, all we've seen is some pictures, but already the positive and negative comments are flying around. Even in this office, where we tend to agree on cars most of the time, we can't decide whether we like the looks or not.

Whatever your thoughts on the styling, we can all agree that the new Hilux could not have come at a better time. The current

model is getting rather outdated compared to its rivals, and while it remains the sales champion of SA, things are not as clear-cut in the passenger market.

As regular readers will know, we include sales figures in our buyer's guide, but when it comes to bakkies, we only count the sales of extended and double-cab models. The Hilux may be on top as far as all-inclusive sales are concerned, but in the leisure market, the Ford Ranger is the undisputed champion. Still, one can't deny the Hilux its legacy. It first hit dealerships in 1968, selling over 16 million in more than 180 countries. This year Toyota SA will celebrate a million units sold locally.

Toyota really needs the new Hilux to be all things to all men, and at first glance it seems to have worked really hard on the recipe for

its new prizefighter.

We'll leave styling out of it for the moment, but we'll say this: the new Hilux certainly can't be accused of being cute, which is the principal design sin when it comes to the business of building double-cab bakkies. For the record, the new model is 70mm longer and 20mm wider than the one it replaces, so it's definitely going to give the Ranger a run for its money in terms of size.

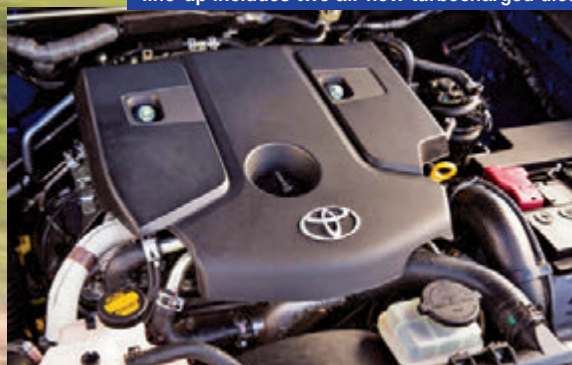
The most important changes, and the ones we are most interested in, are to be found beneath the skin.

First and foremost, the interior is as modern as anything you'll find in a luxury SUV these days. The vehicle is stylish but more importantly, it now features an electrostatic multi-touch control panel, and luxury seats.





The interior of the new Hilux is a giant leap forward compared to the current model. Note the all-new electrostatic multi-touch interface and the lack of the small gear lever, which has been replaced by an electronic switch. Below: The engine line-up includes two all-new turbocharged diesel engines with more power than the outgoing models.



The styling at the rear is oddly familiar, but the load-bin can carry 1240kg.

and generally more pleasing to live with.

Its legendary off-road prowess has been secured with the development of an all-new rigid frame, upgraded leaf spring suspension and shock absorbers.

The tried and trusted 3,0-litre D-4D is being retired in favour of a new 2,8-litre turbodiesel engine with 132kW and 450Nm on tap. A 2,4-litre turbocharged diesel, which produces 119kW and 400Nm, is also joining the local line-up. Both

department. That's a good thing, because Hilux owners tend to buy into the brand's reputation for toughness and reliability and the engines, while still down on power compared to those in the equivalent Ford Rangers, were built to last. You could probably pour a litre of paraffin and some gravel in the fuel tank of that newly developed 2,8-litre turbodiesel and it would still keep going.

Toyota has focused on retaining the Hilux character, and refining it slightly. It will still be the go-to bakkie for adventurers and small business owners alike. With a braked tow rating of 3500kg and a load-bin payload of 1240kg, it's clear that this bakkie hasn't forgotten its roots.

Hiroki Nakajima, executive chief engineer behind the Hilux and also a managing officer of Toyota Motor Corporation, explains: "Our entire development concept was centred on redefining toughness. We aimed to make the new Hilux 'tougher', based on a much broader interpretation of that word. The message we want to deliver to our customers is embodied in our slogan for the vehicle – 'A new era for the pick-up. Every inch a Hilux.'"

This is echoed by Calvyn Hamman, senior vice president, sales and marketing, for Toyota SA. He says: "It's instantly recognisable as a Hilux, it feels like a Hilux, it drives like a Hilux – only better. Successfully melding innovation, sophistication and extrovert design with fantastic reliability, the all-new Hilux will be the benchmark. The legend is set to continue."

The new Hilux will arrive in SA in the first quarter of 2016. Local pricing and specifications will be announced closer to its introduction. **LW**

Perhaps Toyota borrowed a few guys from Lexus to have a look at the new Hilux before it got the green stamp?

The biggest source of debate about the interior is likely to concern Toyota's decision to drop the famous kort stokkie in favour of an electronic four-wheel drive switch. That's right, Hilux fanatics, that satisfying mechanical shift has been replaced by a push of a button.

But don't be misled into thinking that the Hilux has gone soft. The new model has been put through extensive testing to ensure that it upholds Toyota's reputation for toughness and reliability.

The company asked for customer feedback during development, which has led to the Hilux being more efficient, refined, quieter

six-speed manual and automatic gearboxes will be offered. The manual box is a world first in the bakkie segment. Toyota calls it the Intelligent Manual Transmission or i-MT and it supports smooth shifting with rev matching technology.

Although Toyota SA hasn't divulged any information on petrol models yet, we're willing to bet that the two engines in the current Hilux will be carried over to the new model – the beloved 2,7-litre four-cylinder petrol and beefy 4,0-litre V6 engine. Power increases on the petrol models will probably be minimal, but we reckon that faithful Hilux fans won't really care either way.

These engines reveal something we have long suspected. The new Hilux will be the same as the old Hilux, but better in every



# The ultimate in VIP transport

Looking for eight premium leather covered seats? You will find them in Merc's ultimate people mover, the V-Class

**Text:** Gerhard Horn

**Mercedes Benz has** introduced the all-new V-Class to the South African market.

This model has always been the "luxury express" for large families, and it's likely to remain that way for the foreseeable future. The new V-Class is even more spacious, luxurious and efficient than the model it replaces.

We are not sure how Mercedes has managed it, given the design limitations set by the proportions, but the V-Class looks just as elegant and tasteful as the other vehicles in its local line-up.

Interior space and quality are naturally of prime importance, and in this respect the "V"

is in a class of its own. It can accommodate up to eight people and their luggage. And as you'd expect, the seats are configurable and a wide range of options is available to make the interior more practical, more luxurious, or both. You can even fit a table between the second and third rows. That gives some idea of how much space is on offer.

The V-Class comes with four single seats in the rear as standard, but a three-seat bench can be fitted for the second and third rows.

There are a few competitors that offer more or less the same amount of space, but none does it quite as elegantly as the V-Class.

The interior is a seemingly perfect blend of high quality materials, generous standard specification and interesting design features, but as is the case with the rest of Merc's vehicles, there are numerous optional extras that elevate the already lavish interior to S-Class levels of refinement. Even the most difficult VIP would be hard pressed to find something to complain about in the back of a V-Class when no cost is spared. The Avantgarde interior package, for example, includes Nappa leather seats and armrests, leather multifunction steering wheel, wood trim and sporty pedals in brushed aluminium.

The driver can also take comfort in the knowledge that his passengers are as safe as possible. The V-Class comes as standard with every active and passive safety system you could expect at the price, while the premium safety gadgets are optional extras.

An all-wheel drive system is available as well, for those owners who frequently find themselves in low-grip situations.

There are three turbocharged diesel engine options. The range kicks off with the V200, which produces 100kW and 330Nm of torque. Next in line is the V220, which puts out a nice 120kW and 380Nm of torque, while the headline act, for the moment at least, is the V250 BlueTec with 140kW and 440Nm at its disposal. The latter powertrain allows the V-Class to accelerate to 100km/h in around nine seconds, so if your VIPs are usually in a hurry, this is the one to go for!

A six-speed manual transmission is specified as standard on 100kW and 120kW derivatives with rear-wheel drive, while Merc's seven-speed 7G-Tronic is standard on the V250 and all variants with all-wheel drive. The automatic gearbox is an optional extra for 200 and 220 models.

All of this opulence and space comes at a price, however, with a base V 200 CDI costing R695 981. The mid-range V 220 CDI retails for R726 875 and the V 250 BlueTec costs R783 416.

A V 220 CDI with the optional Avantgarde trim, which adds a number of stylish upgrades, goes for R949 175, while the same specification with a 250 engine will set you back R984 196. **LW**





# Duster gets a city cousin

Renault South Africa already has a popular and successful small SUV in the plucky Duster, but now the company has decided to add another B-segment crossover to its portfolio – the city-oriented Captur

**Text:** GG van Rooyen

**Here are some** of the reasons we love the Renault Duster.

Firstly, it is unpretentious and old school. The Duster is a no-nonsense SUV that sports a basic but effective design.

Secondly, the Duster is very well priced, considering all that it offers. True, some of the interior finishes might be a tad hard and plastic, but it is still a well-specced vehicle.

Thirdly, the Duster boasts some proper off-road ability. It's not a rock crawler with low-range gearing, but it can handle quite harsh conditions. Thanks to a lockable all-wheel-drive system and decent ground clearance, the Duster can tackle ugly gravel roads, not to mention pretty deep sand.

Sadly, though, good basic design and above average off-road ability won't necessarily endear the Duster to everyone. When it comes to compact SUVs, these attributes are not that attractive to potential buyers. Generally speaking, they want vehicles that are "sporty", "funky" and "fashionable". Most people just don't care whether their compact SUV can deal with a dirt road since they will seldom venture off the tar.

Enter the Captur – Renault's offering for those who are left cold by the Spartan nature of the Duster.

The Captur is everything you'd expect a modern little crossover to be. It is attractive, stylish, boasts loads of infotainment features, is frugal and is very well priced.

Despite the vehicle's fairly small dimensions, there is a decent amount of boot space (455 litres, growing to 1235 litres with the rear seats down). Moreover, the boot has a novel

## PRICING

Renault Captur 66kW Expression	R219 900
Renault Captur 66kW Dynamique	R239 900
Renault Captur 88kW EDC Dynamique	R279 900

split-level feature that effectively divides the luggage area in two – perfect for hiding valuable items.

The Captur is offered in three derivatives, all petrol-driven. There is the flagship Dynamique EDC featuring Renault's new generation 1,2-litre 88kW EDC Turbo powerplant, the Dynamique 66kW Turbo and Expression 66kW Turbo.

The Dynamique EDC is mated to a six-speed dual-clutch automatic, while the 66kW models make do with manual shifters.

On the features front, the Captur boasts Bluetooth connectivity as well as Renault's MediaNav integrated on-board multimedia system with 7" touchscreen. Satellite navigation and Arkamys radio plus USB port are included in the price tag, with every feature easily accessible via fingertip controls alongside the steering column.

An Eco mode function is available at the push of a button. It electronically modifies the engine's response to optimise fuel consumption by up to 10%.

A hands-free key card, electric side mirrors and electric windows (front and rear) plus automatic climate control, rear parking sensors, automatic headlights and rain sensitive front wipers are standard across the range. A tyre pressure sensor is included in the Dynamique models.

The Captur is available in 2WD only.

The 66kW Expression is priced at R219 900 and the 66kW Dynamique goes for R239 900. The 88kW EDC Dynamique costs R279 900.

As with Renault's entire product range, the Captur comes standard with a five-year/150 000km mechanical warranty, a three-year/45 000km service plan and a six-year anti-corrosion warranty. Services take place at 15 000km/one-year intervals.

The company sold more than 160 000 Captur units across Europe in 2014. It appears set to be just as successful in SA. **LW**







# World wheels



## Hennessey builds all-new Raptor

Hennessey has finally started production of the 2015 Velociraptor 600. It is based on the all-new 2015 Ford F-150 FX4 4x4, but Hennessey has upgraded the supercharger to increase the power output of the 5,0-litre V8 to 447kW.

The package includes 17-inch wheels with 33-inch rubber, black flared wheel arches and optional off-road bumpers for the front and rear.

No official performance figures are available yet, but rumours are that it's able to accelerate to 100km/h in less than five seconds. The top speed will probably be limited to 200km/h.

The vehicle costs around R800 000 in the US, but don't expect to see one in SA, as it's available only in left-hand drive.

## Mercedes gives G-Class another facelift

Mercedes-Benz has revealed the facelifted G-Class.

Outside, it's basically the same car except for new bumpers and flared wheel arches on the AMG derivative. The biggest changes have taken place underneath that boxy body.

The old V8 in the G500 has been replaced by an all-new bi-turbo 4,0-litre V8 petrol engine. It produces 310kW and 610Nm of torque, which allows this enormous car to accelerate to 100km/h in less than six seconds.

The G350 diesel's power output has been increased from 155kW/540Nm to 180kW/600Nm of torque.

The G63 AMG's figures have been increased to 420kW/760Nm, while the G65, which we probably won't get in SA, now has a power rating of 463kW and 1000Nm of torque.

The new G-Class will reach SA early in 2016.



## Mazda CX-3 trim levels revealed in US

Mazda US has released a few details about the 2016 CX-3 compact SUV.

Though the specifications may be different in SA, the US version will be available in three trim levels: Sport, Touring and Grand Touring. Specification is fairly generous across the range, with all cars boasting cruise control, infotainment and Bluetooth connectivity. At the top end of the range, you also get climate control and heated front seats.

A 2,0-litre SkyActive petrol engine with 108kW and 197Nm on tap provides power. It's mated to a six-speed automatic transmission. The all-wheel drive system is an optional extra.

The Mazda CX-3 will arrive in SA later this year.

## Kahn Design introduces latest project vehicle

Kahn Design has unveiled its striking new Flying Huntsman 105 Pick Up.

Modifications made to the two-door Defender 90 on which it is based include lengthening the bonnet by 400mm and increasing the width by 150mm.

It has front and rear wide wings with vents and bolt apertures, extended wheel arches, front bumper replacement with bumper lights, bonnet and side vents with mesh stainless steel, side steps, X-Lander front grille and 18-inch Defend 1945 retro wheels in matt black, with a gold stripe.

Power comes from a 2.2-litre diesel engine. Drive is to all four wheels via a button-operated six-speed automatic transmission. Brake and suspension upgrades complete the engineering overhaul.

Inside, the centre glove box, passenger dashboard, grab handles, door panel inserts, instrument binnacle, roof headlining and sun visors are all upholstered to complement the front two GTB sports seats.







### Mercedes takes fight to BMW X4

Mercedes has taken the wraps off its challenger to the BMW X4. It's called the GLC Coupe and it's set to make its debut at the Shanghai Motor Show.

So far, all we have are pictures and a few specifications for the concept car. Details will be revealed when the GLC makes its debut later this year.

A bi-turbo 3,0-litre petrol engine with 270kW and 520Nm on tap powers the concept vehicle, but we're willing to bet that a few sportier derivatives, as well as an AMG model, are in development as you read this.

It's fairly obvious that Mercedes will be selling the GLC as a sports car rather than an SUV.

The engine is mated to a nine-speed automatic gearbox, which sends the power to the 4Matic all-wheel drive system.

### Nissan builds hybrid Murano for China

Nissan has introduced a hybrid version of the Murano in China. It uses a supercharged 2,5-litre petrol engine, electric motor and battery pack. No power output figures are available, but the combined power output is likely to be somewhere in the region of 200kW.

With that much power the hybrid will be no slouch, which is rather nice considering how sporty this particular model looks on the outside.

The Murano hybrid will go on sale in China soon, but Nissan has yet to state whether it will find its way to other countries.



### New Sorento wins design award

Kia Motors continues to reel in awards for its outstanding designs, with the new Sorento, the brand's flagship SUV, receiving a prestigious iF Design Award for the first time.

The jury of the globally-recognised awards honoured the third generation of the Sorento with an award in the Product category. Apart from overall design, judging criteria included finish, degree of innovation, environmental impact and safety.

"I am very proud of this award for the Kia Sorento because it is recognition of the great advance in quality we have achieved," said Kia president and chief design officer Peter Schreyer.

The all-new Sorento arrives in SA in the third quarter of 2015. More information about engine options and specification levels will be released closer to the local launch date.



### Toyota takes wraps off Rav4 rally monster

Toyota unveiled its Rav4 rally car at the Monster Energy Supercross Championship at Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas.

Ryan Millen, who won the 2014 Baja 1000 in a Toyota Tundra TRD Pro, will drive the Rav4 rally vehicle at various races including some in the 2015 Rally America 2WD Open Class season.

The vehicle sports a stock transmission and a stock 2.5-litre, four-cylinder, double-overhead cam engine that pushes out around 126kW.

Millen and his crew removed more than 225kg of weight and added a roll cage, BFGoodrich all-terrain DOT 215/75R15 tyres, and upgrades to the suspension.

"I've driven just about everything Toyota has to offer," said Millen, "and I've been very impressed by the RAV4's tight, compact body and smooth handling. I'm looking forward to putting it through its paces."



For daily 4x4 and SUV news updates, be sure to visit [www.leisurewheels.co.za](http://www.leisurewheels.co.za)



# An Arctic chariot built for a mountain

We have featured the big-wheeled creations built by Gary Swemmer and his 4WD Truckin' Company many times. His latest vehicle, though, is special – the first Arctic Cayenne ever built

Text and photography: GG van Rooyen





**While exhibiting his** vehicles at an outdoor show at the start of the year, Gary Swemmer was approached by none other than Schalk Burger Jnr – not the rugby player, the rally driver. As racing fans will undoubtedly know, Burger has a need for speed, so his request for Gary and his team was a bit unusual. Instead of asking if Gary could turn his bakkie or Cruiser into an Arctic Truck, he wanted to know whether his Porsche Cayenne could be given the Arctic treatment.

“At first, I really wasn’t sure,” says Gary. “There is a big difference between the typical vehicle that we do and a Porsche Cayenne. The hardcore 4x4s that we usually modify have a ladder-frame chassis with a body on top. The Cayenne, however, boasts a monocoque construction, so I wasn’t sure if we could modify it without weakening the structure.”

Despite his reservations, Gary promised to give it his best shot. The vehicle arrived at his workshop a short while later, and he set to work. Luckily, he discovered that he could indeed modify the wheel arches and other components without compromising the monocoque chassis.

So the dramatic step of cutting into the pricey Cayenne’s body was committed to, and the existing arches were cut away. These were replaced by the typical Arctic Trucks wheel arches, which are obviously much beefier.


As is also usual, 35-inch tyres were fitted, but instead of using the normal small rims and chunky tyres, Gary decided to give the Cayenne a bigger 20-inch rim that suited the Porsche’s sporty character better.

“We decided to go for the Cooper Discoverer ST Maxx tyre,” says Gary. “It’s a great wheel that’s somewhere between an all-terrain and a mud-terrain tyre. We fitted the Porsche with a set of 35x12.5 R20 tyres.”

Another unusual addition to the Cayenne was a Fox suspension. Associated with off-road racing, Fox is known for making some very rough and robust suspensions.

“We fitted the Fox suspension to ensure that the Cayenne would retain its sporty character. This car won’t be used for racing, but we still wanted to make sure that it had a suspension that could keep up with the engine on sand and gravel.”

And how does the Cayenne perform now? “It goes very well,” says Gary. “It is bigger and taller now, but it still feels fast and agile. It should do well in the dunes.”

The Arctic conversion is complete, but there is still some work that needs to be done. Schalk Burger apparently wants to fiddle with the exhaust system to get it sounding as angry as it looks... 



Above: The vehicle created by Gary Swemmer is the first Arctic Cayenne. Left: The Porsche rides on 35-inch Cooper ST Maxx tyres and 20-inch 4WD Truckin’ rims. Right: The suspension is an adjustable Fox set-up, providing a great ride on any terrain. Below: A custom-built bash plate offers protection.



A roof rack and light bar complete the picture.



**MORE INFORMATION** For more information on the Arctic Cayenne conversion, contact Gary Swemmer on 082 783-7042. You can also visit [www.4wdtruckin.co.za](http://www.4wdtruckin.co.za).



# The ultimate early morning coffee run

Inspired by the car named after a drink that was invented hundreds of years ago, we drove a few hundred kilometres in search of SA's ultimate cup of Joe

**Text:** Gerhard Horn **Photography:** GG van Rooyen

**Some time during** the 15th century, a guy in Yemen decided to peel a few Arabica berries and roast them over a fire for a few minutes to see what would happen. Afterwards, he poured boiling water through the roasted berries and sat back to enjoy the resulting drink. In doing so, he became the first person to savour a good ol' cup of

comforting coffee while watching the sun peep over the horizon.

Okay, so maybe that's not exactly how it happened, but that's how we imagine it. The place and date are correct, but unfortunately we don't have a name or face to put to the inventor of the world's favourite drink. If we had, he'd probably be looked upon with the

same admiration we reserve for people like Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein and Joel Stransky.

*Leisure Wheels* runs on coffee. Our work day only gets started once we've all arrived and droned around the coffee station for five minutes, and no doubt it's the same story for office workers everywhere. Coffee, in our opinion, has done more for the world than sliced bread.





To give coffee the recognition it deserves, we decided to take the aptly named Opel Mokka on a soft-roader adventure to find the ultimate cup of coffee in SA. Not the mass-produced stuff you find in fast food outlets, but rather a cup made from hand picked, home roasted beans. We wanted something made with love, and not just a scoop of instant powder mixed with two sugars and some long-life milk.

### The Mokka

When Opel introduced the Mokka to the local market, we were a bit sceptical. It was priced above its main rivals, but a quick drive revealed why. In terms of interior quality and standard specification, it's a cut above the rest.

We knew it was a decent performer on tar, having previously spent two days driving



The coffee beans are checked after the roasting process to ensure quality. Left: A selection of historical coffee related artefacts on display at Sabie Valley Coffee. Above right: Nothing brightens up your day more than a smiley face on a home-brewed cappuccino.

it on the magnificent roads surrounding Port Elizabeth. Its 1,4-litre turbocharged petrol engine was willing to please, while the suspension and steering revealed an underlying sportiness that we simply weren't expecting.

Our time behind the wheel was limited, but we made a mental note to book one for a road test as soon as possible, to explore the long haul credentials of this impressive compact crossover.

### The perfect cup of coffee

As usual, we started our road trip before the sun had made its appearance. We were obviously in dire need of some coffee, but our GPS revealed that we still had 420km to go before we reached the boutique coffee plantation in the Mpumalanga lowveld.

Waiting that long for our fix wasn't an option, so we pulled over at a petrol station on the N4 just outside Pretoria for a cup of mass-produced coffee. It served as a benchmark, giving us a much-needed boost, but two hours later we had to pull over again for another fix.

The second cup was better, giving us the caffeine boost we'd need to keep us alert on the terrible roads that lay ahead.

Our destination was the Forever Resort next to the Blyde River Canyon, but to get that perfect cup of coffee, we had to make a bit of a detour through Hazyview.

**Did you know?**  
Coffee plants are all part of the Rubiaceae family. They grow all year round and can reach a height of around five metres if left unkempt. The flowers they produce are white and moderately fragrant.



## SOFT-ROADER GETAWAY OPEL MOKKA IN HAZYVIEW



Sabie Valley Coffee is large enough to keep you entertained all morning. The food is brilliant and the tranquil setting is perfect for those escaping from the city.



The Mokka, though obviously designed for city use, performed admirably on Mpumalanga's dirt roads.



The Mokka, though obviously designed for city use, performed admirably on Mpumalanga's dirt roads.



The first few corners on the quiet road approaching the town had us wishing we were behind the wheel of an Astra OPC, but a few potholes later we were glad to be in something with higher than average ground clearance, fitted with rubber with a decent profile.

Mpumalanga is one big pothole these days, with a bit of tar surrounding it. Some of those holes were big enough to consume the 18-inch alloys on the Mokka, which made for an interesting game of pothole dodging.

This ridiculous problem also highlighted why cars like the Mokka are becoming increasingly popular. We tried our best to dodge the holes, but because of the oncoming traffic, this wasn't always possible. When it came to deciding between a head-on collision and a pothole, we naturally chose the latter.

The average sedan or hatch would have required a new tyre, or front bumper for that matter, but the Mokka took it all in its stride.

With caffeine levels getting dangerously low and our nerves frazzled, we finally arrived at Sabie Valley Coffee for the ultimate in Arabica-based beverages.

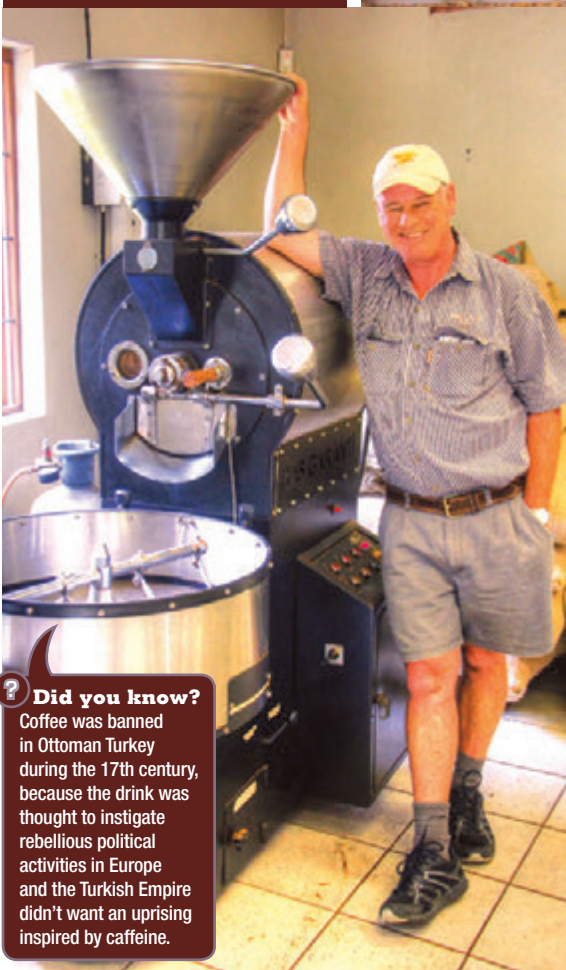


The views from the top of the Blyde River Canyon are breathtaking.

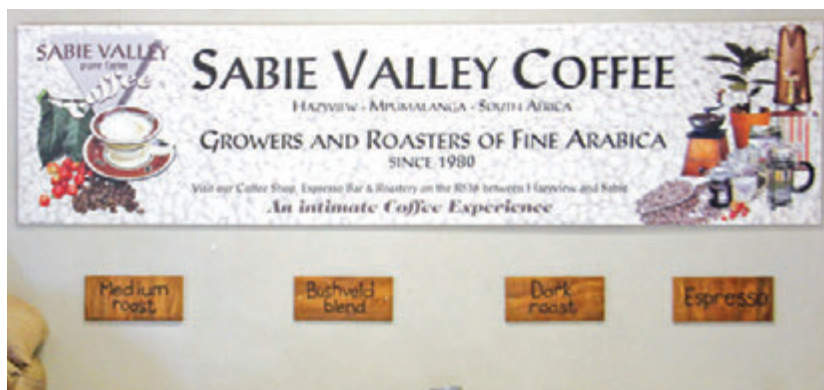




The range of blends available at Sabie Valley Coffee. Right: The barista we encountered makes one mean cup of Joe. If this stuff doesn't wake you up, nothing will!



**Did you know?** Coffee was banned in Ottoman Turkey during the 17th century, because the drink was thought to instigate rebellious political activities in Europe and the Turkish Empire didn't want an uprising inspired by caffeine.



Above: Sabie Valley Coffee owner, Tim Buckland, with his old-school roasting machine. Right: The Forever Resort Blyde River Canyon is an exceptional venue. There are many accommodation options, including chalets of various sizes and caravan stands. Loads of activities keep the kids happy and there are a number of entertainment options for the adults. We can vouch for the on-site restaurant, which produced the best rack of ribs we've had for years. The resort has its own lookout point, with views over the canyon.



## SOFT-ROADER GETAWAY OPEL MOKKA IN HAZYVIEW

### ? Did you know?

Archery, though used in combat in the dark ages, has become a popular recreational activity these days. One refers to someone who participates in the sport as a bowman, but once you reach an expert level you are referred to as a toxophilite.





## Sabie Valley Coffee

We arrived just in time for a pre-lunch java. The owner, Tim Buckland, greeted us in a typically warm Mpumalanga fashion. He offered us a cappuccino while we waited for the roasting machine to warm up. We

weren't there just for a taste – we wanted to experience as much of the coffee making process as possible.

This little boutique farm started out 20 years ago to meet local demand for coffee, but its owners soon realised that this business model

wasn't economically viable. In 1984, Tim built all the tools necessary for roasting and he hasn't looked back since, using a unique roasting method to get the best out of the Arabica berries.

That single cappuccino was worth the drive alone. It greets you with a friendly, smiley face, after which you take the first sip and experience the taste of freshly roasted coffee beans.

We can't help but be a bit pretentious in giving you a proper description of the taste. It starts off as you'd expect with those signature Arabica flavours dancing around on your tongue. It then works its way down, warming up every part of your body, leaving the slight sweet after-taste of a freshly picked Arabica berry.

We liked Sabie Valley Coffee so much that we decided to stay for lunch. One 100% beef burger later, we tore ourselves away, but only

because we had made prior arrangements to take part in some archery endeavours across the road at Induna Adventures.

Once again, we were warmly greeted. The people in this valley are the friendliest folk around, even when you approach them with seemingly impossible requests.

"Would it be okay if we parked an Opel Mokka on your archery field?"

"Sure, it shouldn't be a problem," is the answer we got.

Induna Adventures has 14 activities to choose from, including white water tubing, quad biking, paintball, zipline and horse riding, but

since we were familiar with archery, thanks to a previous soft-roader adventure, we drove the Mokka up a slippery slope and onto the

Induna Adventures has a number of activities for visitors. They include quad tours, white river tubing and zip-lining. We chose the archery, not just because of the discipline involved but because it looked pretty cool!



### Did you know?

Archaeological evidence suggests that the first bows were used near Hamburg in Germany. These weapons were first used in the late Paleolithic period, which is around 10 000 to 9 000 BC.



## SOFT-ROADER GETAWAY

### OPEL MOKKA IN HAZYVIEW



The interior shows why the Mokka is more expensive than its main rivals. It has that solid German feel, and it comes with every feature one could hope for. We enjoyed the high-tech sound system, but our favourite feature on winter morning had to be the front seat warmers.

archery field. Outdoor activities are so much easier when you don't have to walk to get to them. With the Mokka parked right on the range, all we had to do was set up the bow and take aim.

The Mokka's boot was big enough to swallow our overnight bags as well as a cooler box full of non-alcoholic beverages, which made the activity even more enjoyable.

With the sun swiftly making its way westward, we decided to pay a visit to the local scenic hotspots. We've been to the Pinnacle and God's Window many times, but these famous attractions are so beautiful that it's always worth checking them out when you find yourself in the vicinity.

#### The run to the canyon

With the roads getting better by the kilometre, we had the opportunity to explore the dynamic abilities of the Mokka over the last 50km to the Forever Resort at Blyde River Canyon.

A short detour on gravel revealed that the Mokka is just as comfortable and compliant on dirt as it is on tar. The suspension soaks up the worst of it, while the front-wheel drive



**Did you know?** Mariepskop, at 1 994 metres above sea level, is the highest point of the Blyde River Canyon. The lowest point, which is around 550m above sea level, can be found where the river leaves the canyon.

set-up is more than adequate.

With that settled, we could finally unleash the 1,4-litre turbocharged engine. Ten years ago we would have laughed at the thought of a crossover vehicle with a 1,4-litre engine, but these days the Mokka is considered the powerhouse among its peers, some of which have an engine capacity of less than one litre...

With the sound system playing some motivational tunes, we made the most of the twisty roads leading to our destination.

The drive ended up being one of the most satisfying of the year so far. The Mokka's six-speed manual gearbox snicks from one gear to the next, while the brakes do a stellar job of slowing the car down for those tight hairpins. The steering is perfectly weighted for this kind of car. It's heavy enough to give you confidence on long sweeping corners, but still light enough to make the Mokka easy to live with on a day-to-day basis.

The Mokka, then, is physical evidence that you can still have some driving fun, even when the roads are a complete disaster. It can liven up your day, no matter what the occasion – just like the beverage it is named after. **LW**

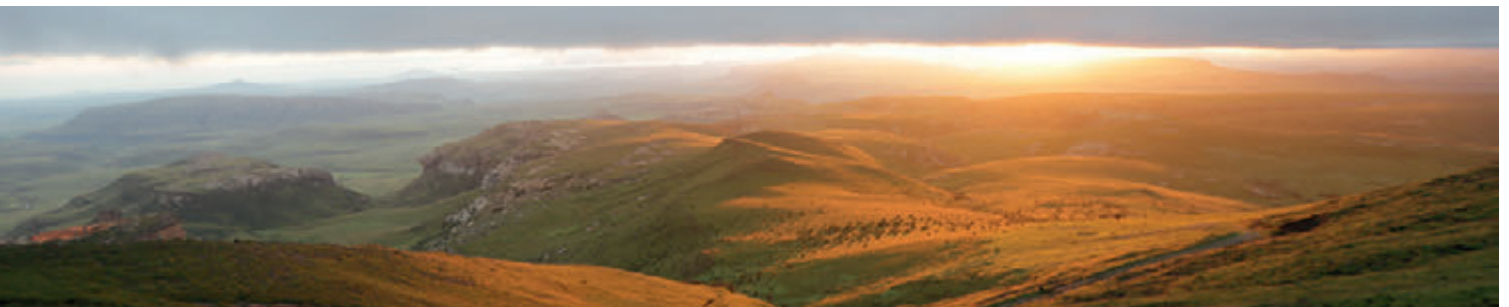
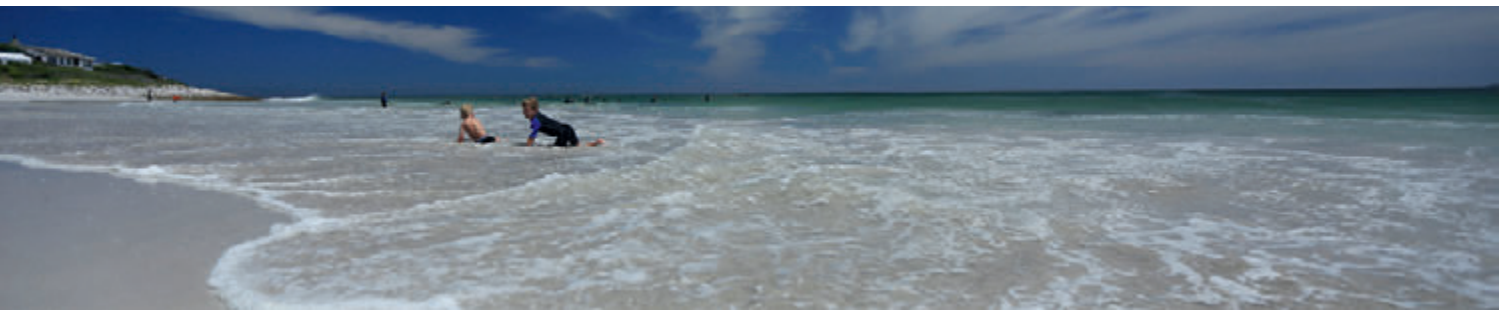


# WIN A HOLIDAY WITH SANPARKS AND TOYOTA

Three lucky readers will each win a weekend trip with their families to a SANParks destination of their choice and the use of a Toyota Fortuner to get them there and back in comfort. The prize includes accommodation for a family of four, an adventure activity, if offered at the park, and conservation fees.

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**IT'S EASY:** email a story\* and photographs of your most memorable experience, either in the bush or berg or beach to [jannie@leisurewheels.co.za](mailto:jannie@leisurewheels.co.za), and your name will go into the draw for monthly Toyota Fortuner gear prizes and the main prize of a family holiday with SANParks.

\*The story should not be longer than 300 words, hi-res images no bigger than 5MB in total.

Leisure  
**wheels**

**Getaway**

**car**





# Built 30 years too soon

With performance being the main topic in this edition of *Leisure Wheels*, we decided to take a look back at the world's first blistering 4x4

**Text:** Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Supplied

The "performance 4x4" that we consider to be the first in the breed did not come from BMW, Mercedes or Audi, as one might expect. In the late 1980s, these brands were still far too conservative to build anything other than saloon cars, so the Italians got there first.

The car we are talking about is the infamous Lamborghini LM002 – a car so ostentatious and thirsty that you had to be a multi-millionaire just to drive it from Turin to Milan.

It may have ended up as the world's first performance SUV, but it was never intended to be one. Lamborghini actually designed and built the first prototype in 1977 to be used either as a military vehicle for the US army or as an oil exploration vehicle. One might say it was assembled to conquer dunes in search of enough fossil fuels to keep it running for a year or so...

Think we're kidding? Well, here are the LM002's fuel consumption figures. When driven carefully, it would consume 35,2 l/100km. At least it had a 290-litre tank, so you only had to fill up every 800km. If you had to fill up an LM002 in SA today, it would cost R3700!

The prototype was more efficient than the eventual production model, but only marginally. It was called the Cheetah and it was equipped with a US-built V8 engine







The LM002 parked next to the car set to replace it, the Lamborghini Urus. Right: The slightly ostentatious interior of the LM002.

mounted in the rear.

For reasons unknown, Lamborghini decided to swap the original V8 powertrain for an AMC V8 engine after initial demonstrations. Then it dropped V8s altogether.

The idea of mounting the engine at the back was also abandoned because of the vehicle's poor handling characteristics.

So it wasn't an easy process. The only thing Lamborghini carried over from the test vehicle was the basic styling. An all-new chassis had to be developed, but Lamborghini could make use of an engine from one of its other models.

For the production vehicle, which made its debut in 1986, it decided to go with the 4,8-litre petrol V12 from the Countach, which was modified to produce slightly more power than it did in Lambo's definitive supercar. The end result was code-named LMA002 and its engine produced a relatively impressive 250kW. It was considered fast back then, but the average performance SUV these days develops 400kW or more. To put things in perspective, the LMA002 would struggle to keep up with a turbocharged petrol Ford Kuga these days.

The V12 was eventually upgraded by increasing the capacity to 5,2-litres and replacing the standard carburettors with six dual-barrel Weber carburettors, which pushed the power output up to 330kW. That was enough to get the LM002 to 100km/h in around eight seconds and on to a top speed of 210km/h. (The current X3 2,0-litre turbodiesel is faster...)

Unfortunately, by this point the US military had lost all interest in the project. No reason was given, but one can only imagine how difficult it would be to go to war in a hand-built double-cab with an Italian V12 supercar engine.

As an oil finding machine it fared equally bad. Only a handful were sold for business use, with most of them being scooped up by wealthy individuals in the Middle East.

For a while Lamborghini also offered the option of a 7,2-litre V12 out of a powerboat.

Even as civilian transport it was a flop.

Lamborghini tried its best to make the car easy to live with by fitting a full leather interior, electric windows, air conditioning, run-flat tyres and a sound system. The space utilisation was a bit dodgy though. The interior was very cramped considering the size of the vehicle.

The sales results were disastrous. After all the money Lamborghini had poured into the project, only 300 were sold. It cost more or less the same as the Countach, of which 658 units were sold by the time it was replaced by the Diablo.

The LM002 also provided one of life's greatest "what if" moments. Lamborghini sent an LM002 to compete in the Dakar Rally. The engineers tore out all of the interior comforts, modified the suspension and upped the power to 450kW, but the company ran out of money before the race started.

Would it have sold better with a Dakar victory to back it up? That's a question that will never be answered, but success in the Dakar certainly did a lot of good for companies such as Mitsubishi and Toyota.

Lamborghini finally pulled the plug on the LM002 in 1993. Back then the world wasn't ready for a performance 4x4, but times have changed. These days there's a performance derivative of most of the high-end SUVs, as you can see in our performance SUV shoot-out elsewhere in this magazine.

As a result, the LM002 is finally getting the attention it deserves – for its notoriety. It has been named one of the worst cars ever several times, but despite this, buying a "clean" example these days would set you back somewhere between R1,8 million and R2,1 million.

Lamborghini is preparing a "spiritual successor" to the LM002 called the Urus. It was confirmed for production late last month and will go head-to-head with Bentley, Rolls Royce and Lotus' upcoming SUVs.

Will it be more successful than Lambo's first effort? The timing certainly seems much better this time round. **LW**



A monster 4,8-litre V12 powertrain for the world's first big SUV.



The Urus's interior raises the bar a few notches, but it's still not what you would call tasteful.



Lambo's new SUV has yet to receive the go-ahead, but if it does it will go head-to-head with the likes of the Aston Martin DBX and Bentley Bentayga.



## ADJUSTABLE SHOCK ABSORBERS

### TOUGH DOG TESTING



# A setting for any occasion

Opposite Lock recently held an information day to talk the media through their new adjustable foam cell shock absorbers. We had the opportunity to put them to the test.

**Text:** Gerhard Horn **Photography:** Danie Botha

**We've all heard** the term "adjustable shock absorber", but most people understand it as something you would find on a track day special and not a Ford Ranger.

Actually, a lot of people don't understand just how important a shock absorber is. When you break down a car to its basic components, you would struggle to find other parts that take as much strain and work as hard as these things.

Opposite Lock reminded us of this when it held a small media day to introduce its new Tough Dog foam cell adjustable shock absorber.

The "adjustable" part is fairly self-explanatory, but it's the "foam cell" bit that has most people scratching their heads.

Without getting too technical, the foam cell takes up the empty space in a shock absorber that is usually occupied by air or nitrogen. The foam cell prevents bubbles forming in the shock absorber, which makes it significantly

more resistant to shock fade than a normal gas shock absorber.

Opposite Lock took one of its new Tough Dog shock absorbers apart to show just how much thought and engineering goes into this often overlooked component. It was an interesting lecture on what many may see as a boring topic, and it gave us an idea of what to look for when we drive modified cars in the future.

We won't bore you with everything that was said, but there was one important point that every off-roader should consider when fitting aftermarket components. If you remember just one thing from this article, let it be this: make sure your aftermarket components are fitted by an expert. A significant number of suspension failures can be attributed directly to the incorrect fitment of a shock absorber. This puts pressure on parts of the absorber that were not designed to cope with that much stress.

Opposite Lock gave us the opportunity to test the foam cell shock absorbers, which were fitted to a 3,2-litre Ford Ranger double cab. Driving this car in isolation would have been pointless, so the company had another stock-standard Ranger at the ready.

First, we drove the standard Ranger through a set of nasty axle twisters to experience the wheel articulation for ourselves. The Ford is a very capable vehicle, which made it hard to believe that we would notice any significant improvement when we got behind the wheel of the Ranger equipped with the Tough Dog shock absorbers.

Our hosts planted a flag directly next to the front wheels so the test could be repeated with accuracy, after which a tape measure was produced to measure the distance between the lip of the alloy wheel closest to the ground, all the way up to the wheel arch of the Ranger.

As the holes got progressively bigger during the rest of the course, we noticed the standard Ranger's side steps touching at certain points. It was not really a big flaw, but a few hard knocks like that could easily dislodge the attractive side steps, which certainly are not cheap to replace.

We got out of the standard Ranger and straight into the Tough Dog vehicle. We drove the exact same line through the axle twisters, stopped at the flag and measured the length between the same two points. The tape measure showed an improvement of around 20% in wheel travel compared with the standard shock absorber. This doesn't



Simon Vella, head of design and development for Tough Dog Australia, talks the media through the process of manufacturing a suspension coil.



sound like much, but those few millimetres could end up being the difference between successfully negotiating a tough 4x4 obstacle or getting stuck.

Further down the line, the Tough Dog absorbers again proved their worth when we completed the rest of the obstacles without bashing the side steps.

After testing the impressive wheel articulation, we were given the chance to test the handling of the Tough Dog Ranger on a dirt pan. For the first run, the adjustable shock absorbers were turned to setting one, which is as soft as possible. One lap later, the absorbers were put on setting nine, which is as hard as possible. The adjustments are made via a dial on the absorbers themselves.

With the soft setting, the Ranger was very comfortable – on a par with a few SUVs out there – but it under-steered like a monster when you pushed it a bit.

On setting nine the Ranger was rock solid, which made the handling much better. In fact, you could hang the tail out like a professional rally driver. This is not a very practical exercise, but a lot of fun, nonetheless!

The good news is that these shock absorbers still give you seven other settings to play with. They don't have to be too soft or too hard.



Left: The Ranger fitted with the adjustable Tough Dog suspension showed a definite, measurable improvement in wheel articulation compared to the standard vehicle. Above: Jaco Nel of Opposite Lock SA demonstrates the different settings on the Tough Dog adjustable shock absorber.

For off-roading, the driver can dial down to a softer setting, while a firmer setting is advisable for inner city and highway driving. When towing a heavy object or carrying a load, one can set the rear suspension to its hardest setting while keeping the front as comfortable as possible for the occupants.

The adjustable shock absorbers seemed to make perfect sense. They really do allow the owner the best of both worlds. They can be firm, responsive and comforting during the week, but soft and squishy when you want to conquer the great outdoors over the weekend. **LW**

There is plenty of middle ground.

According to Tough Dog, most customers go for a moderately soft setting up front and a slightly harder one at the back, but this can be adjusted easily to suit whatever circumstances the driver finds himself in.

# Garage Dreams

*Automotive artists, custom magic.*



DStv

**IGNITION**  
DStv channel 189



# Mountain-magic!

Reaching the village of Rhodes in the Eastern Cape is a bit of an adventure in itself. Tucked away in the foothills of the Maluti mountains, just a rock's throw from Lesotho, Rhodes is accessible only via beautiful gravel mountain passes that are measured in hours, not kilometres. But in Rhodes a new world of magic awaits. Indeed, this little village is probably one of the last wild outposts in SA

Text: Danie Botha Photography: Jannie Herbst, Susan Kölz



Rhodes's very own "Grizzly Adams", or Dave Walker. Dave owns the Walkerbouts Inn, and he knows everything about everyone in the village. He also drives a Fortuner – his "church car" for going to town on the rough gravel roads in the area.





## DAY 1 - A bearded man with stories to tell

The big man with the white beard stares down at us, from the other side of the counter.

He looks vaguely familiar. His voice, the mannerisms... his size.

It's... it's Grizzly Adams! And he lives in the village of Rhodes, in the Eastern Cape!

The television character of Grizzly Adams (or Jopie Adam, as he was called in the translated version of the popular American series), was based on a real-life legend called John "Grizzly" Adams, a famous mountain man who trained bears for shows.

In the television series, Grizzly is falsely accused of murder, and with no other option he heads into the wild Californian mountains of the 1800s. There, he saves a bear cub, later named Ben, from certain death, and the two become inseparable partners – and legends in their own time, too.

And now Grizzly Adams is standing in front of me, here in Rhodes. In the mountains.

But he does not go by the name, Grizzly. This is Dave – Dave Walker. He owns the Walkerbouts Inn in the three-horse village, and is one of the most recognisable characters in the area.

Everyone knows Dave, and Dave knows everyone. He doesn't have a grizzly bear companion, but he does have a Toyota Fortuner 3.0D4-D.

"I've been driving Toyotas since 1980," says the big man. "I started off with a Hilux

Nigel Owles is the owner of the historic Rhodes Hotel. But following a disputed sale seven years ago, the hotel is in need of a makeover and some TLC. Below: Dave Walker and Janbert Reeders discuss the Fortuner in the Walkerbouts Inn bar. This is the heart of the village when the sun goes down.



SRX, then upgraded to a Venture. But the Venture was like a pot of honey for many local entrepreneurs, so I sold that before any dramas could unfold and bought a Hilux 2.4D, which I still drive today. I acquired the Fortuner as well less than a year ago, and so far I'm very impressed, especially with the overtaking power."

So Rhodes's Grizzly Adams has a "farm Toyota" and a "church Toyota". But how did

he end up here in Rhodes? Was he also on the run from the law?

The big man laughs heartily.

"When I was a student in Bloemfontein I decided to fill my parents' swimming pool with trout... and my impromptu trout farm was underway. But then I met a lad in a Bloemfontein bar one night. When he heard about my home-grown trout, he said he'd show me where the real trout were. He



## #TELLBETTERSTORIES

### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF RHODES



brought me to Rhodes, and the rivers around the village. That was in 1978," says Dave.

After many years of fishing visits, Dave finally moved permanently to the village in 1990. And he was duly nicknamed "Jopie Adam" by the locals.

"When I just arrived here I helped fix some houses in the nearby Bokspuit area, and

when someone jokingly referred to me as Jopie Adam, the name stuck," he says.

We are sitting in the Walkerbouts Inn's bar, and if these walls could talk, the stories would be legion.

It's a Wednesday evening and the bar is filling up. There are only 30 permanent residents in Rhodes, so new faces offer a

good excuse for a beer or three.

Janbert Reeders also drives a Toyota Fortuner 3.0D4D, and the discussion soon evolves from the latest presidential shenanigans to Fortuners.

"I drive a lot, and the Fortuner will last forever on these roads. No matter the conditions, it gets me there and back, every time," says Janbert.

Another patron dares mention the name of another brand, which seems to be giving Toyota's Hilux and Fortuner a tough time in the sales department.

Janbert is not impressed: "Ag no man! That bakkie may look all ladedda today, but it won't last the distance. Toyota vehicles are the only ones that last in our neck of the woods."

As a fifth-generation Rhodes resident, Janbert knows about the challenges of living in a small village.

"I bought the Fortuner brand new, nine years ago. Back then our children were in the school hostel in Bloemfontein, and we used to ferry them back and forth. Now the Fortuner has 210 000km on the clock, and my youngest



Above: Bernard Reynecke sold his shares in a JSE-listed company and now brews his own craft beer (among many other things) and sells 1000 bottles a month.

Bernadette is also farmer. Here she poses with one of her beloved pigs. Interestingly, the Reynecke couple does everything on the Toeka farm the old-fashioned way. The farming methods, the cheese making, the beer brewing... are all "traditional".



daughter is a fourth-year varsity student. The Fortuner just soldiers on, regardless,” says Janbert.

The previously snubbed patron, who dared use the “F-word” in the bar, has another shot.

“That new SUV that is coming later this year... now that will be a strong seller,” he pronounces.

“Dave, please don’t give this man any more alcohol,” says Janbert. “He’s obviously had too much to drink.”

The conversation soon turns to Rhodes. It seems the quaint little town, with a history dating back to the 1880s, is suffering the fate that most rural South Africa appears to be subjected to – inept officialdom, bleeding the community dry.

The consensus seems to be that the local community needs a concerted effort from the powers that be to better manage, coordinate and expand the area’s tourism industry. In the meantime, the people of Rhodes are standing together and forging ahead with initiatives to keep the tourists coming. Dave and his companions had lined up an action-packed morning for us, so it was time for bed.

As we head down the creaky, wooden corridor to our rooms, we hear Janbert’s voice rise above the din in the bar. “Don’t get me started on resale value! Ag no man! Don’t get me started!”

## DAY 2 - Fancy goats, a cello and a splash of craft beer

We start our tour of Rhodes on the run, after a hearty breakfast at Walkabouts.

Sean and Liz de Wet moved to Rhodes a few years ago. Sean is an accountant by profession, but nowadays he plies his trade as a carpenter in his garage, restoring old wooden pieces for Oom Nigel Owles, owner of the famously infamous Rhodes Hotel.

Sadly, the hotel’s doors were closed following a long saga of a sale followed by a dispute, followed by a long and drawn-out legal battle. Oom Nigel is now back in his hotel after years of court cases, but in that time the building fell into disrepair. There is



Far left: Alta Welter is the village’s ace cookie baker. She came to the town to work at a local B&B. But one day the owner told Alta that, because of the economic downturn, she could no longer employ her. So the despondent Alta went strolling through the quiet streets and bumped into Theo Welter (left), who had built his house on the main street with his own hands. Today the couple is married, and the 80-year-old Theo likes to indulge in some cello playing while Alta bakes those excellent cookies.



Tannie Petro, as she is known in the village, runs the school hostel, which has less than 10 occupants. She is also the district’s undisputed koeksister queen, and her products are sold throughout the region. Right: Alina Matroos applying her trade of crochet to create blankets, clothes and – most popularly – fashionable headgear that is apparently selling up a storm.





## #TELLBETTERSTORIES

### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF RHODES



Above, left: Irene Walker and Nkamaueleng Masiwu are the resident clay pot makers – and they sell well, too! Above, right: Sharlene Sankey of the Old Garage Studio Shop creates beautiful, colourful and vibrant tablecloths and other fabric-based artworks that are sold in her little shop. Left: Tony Kietzman is said to be a fly fisherman extraordinaire. And while he's not hooking up a few trout or working with the local community on a unique greenhouse scheme, he takes to a paint brush and creates some artwork! Below: Gail Machanik is a well-known artist who studied in Cape Town, Italy and the US. After buying a "holiday home" in town, she eventually abandoned the bright lights and moved here permanently. Now she and Tony are "an item" and together they run the town's art studio.

no electricity or water. While he waits for the right investor to walk through the historic De Wydeman bar door, Oom Nigel restores old wooden clocks and other items.

Just outside the village we meet Bernard and Bernadette Reynecke. The couple, who used to be based in Johannesburg, living the high life of corporate

executives with fancy cars and houses, now live a more simple life, on the banks of the Bell River. Besides the farming activities, the couple make their own cheese and jams. And Bernard brews a very tasty craft beer, which is served in the Toeka restaurant – a fine-dining establishment on the farm – and sold in the area.

"We produce 1000 bottles a month," says Bernard. "We prefer to stick to traditional methods of doing things, which includes the cheese making, beer brewing and even the farming methods."

After selling his shares in a JSE-listed company, surely the quiet life in Rhodes must be a huge adjustment?

"In Johannesburg, material things mattered. Here they don't mean anything,





and we much prefer it this way," says Bernard. "I still travel to Johannesburg occasionally, but this is where our hearts are."

We stop over at the school hostel, where only five children are currently accommodated. Not surprisingly, it is due to close down soon.

We drop in at the art studio, owned by Gail Machanik. Her partner, Tony Kietzman, is also a budding painter, and a fly fisherman of note. Sharlene Sankey is another local artist, who sells colourful tablecloths.

We meet Susan Kölz's prized Toggenburg goats, all the way from Switzerland. Susan is Dave Walker's partner, and she's been living in Rhodes for decades.

She enters the goat pen, but Heidi, a rather large animal with horns to match, seems irritated by this move.

"King!" calls Susan to her helper. "Come quickly and bring the rope before this goat donners me!"

Thankfully King saves the day and leads Heidi to, well... greener pastures.

After a few more twists and turns in the village, including a cookie tasting and a cello performance, we meet Petro, the newly appointed manager of the information centre. This is where you find out anything about



everything. It is part of an initiative launched by the villagers to promote tourism.

Chatting to Dave again later, we ask why he decided to make the village his home.

"There are many reasons," he says, "the mountains, the trout, the fresh air, the scenery... and for me it's also the people, including the tourists. Because we are so far away from the main tourist drags, those we do get here have come to Rhodes for a reason. They really want to be here."

And the plans to keep the village ticking over?

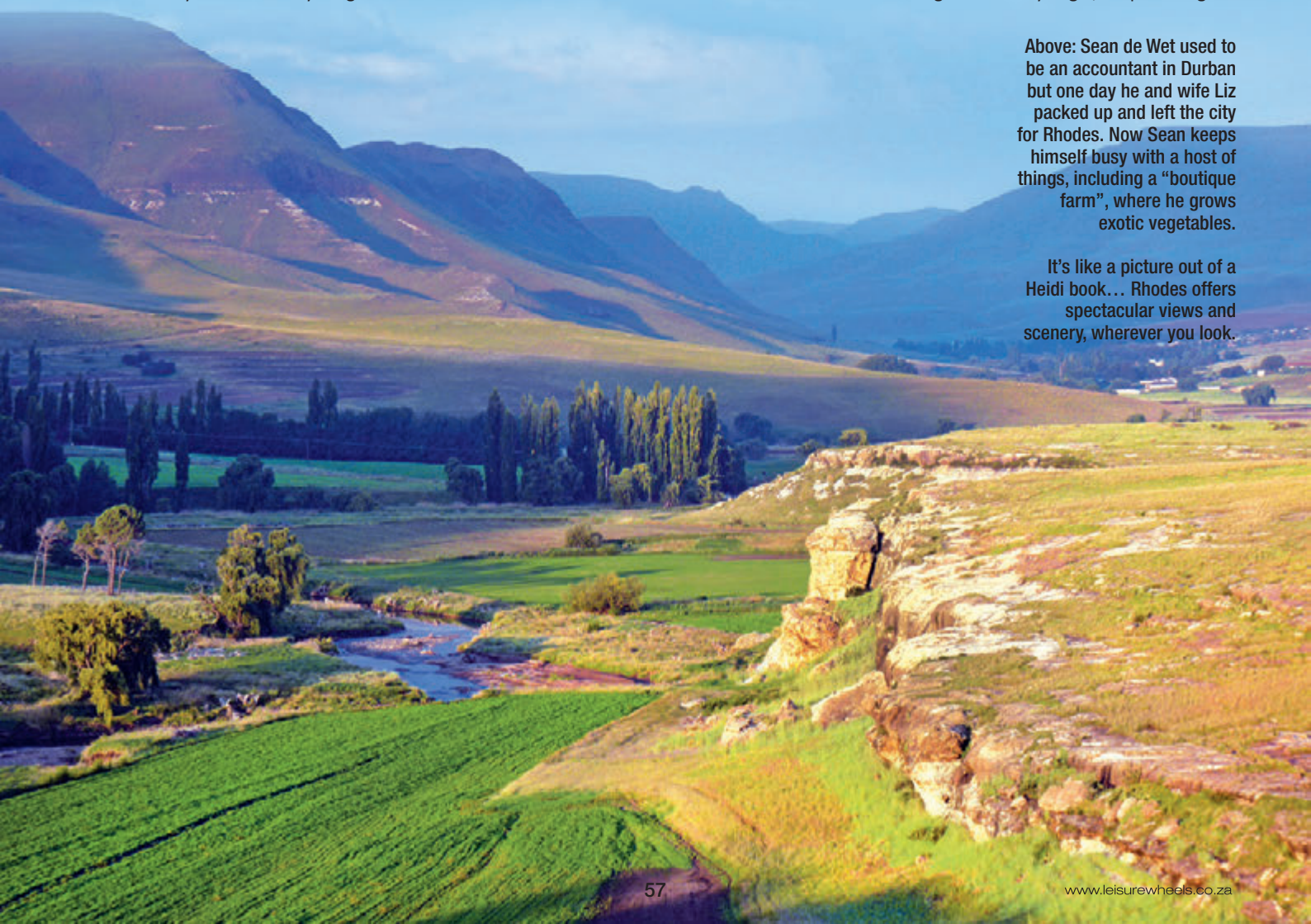
"We recently introduced the *Stoepsitfees* (or "porch sitting festival"), which has proved very popular. It includes all the village's attractions, including art, food and people. And we continue to work with the municipality so that we can bring more tourists to this beautiful but remote part of SA. Rhodes has so much to offer, and we'll do whatever we can to secure its long-term viability.

"This place is magic. Just look at it," he says, pointing towards the village, lying slightly below the inn, the beautiful mountains framing the picture.

He's right. From any angle, it's pure magic.

Above: Sean de Wet used to be an accountant in Durban but one day he and wife Liz packed up and left the city for Rhodes. Now Sean keeps himself busy with a host of things, including a "boutique farm", where he grows exotic vegetables.

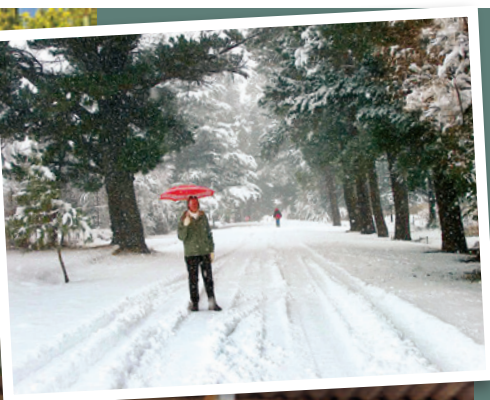
It's like a picture out of a Heidi book... Rhodes offers spectacular views and scenery, wherever you look.





## #TELLBETTERSTORIES

### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF RHODES



Far left: At the end of every rainbow... there is a beautiful Rhodes! Left: Snow is an attraction every year, and the Tiffendell ski resort is just around a few corners. Below left: Petro Schoeman, the village's information office manager, is ready to answer all your queries about places to stay, places to eat and even inform you about the condition of the roads.

#### A little bit of history

The seasonally migratory San people were the first humans to traverse these parts, followed in the late 1800s by pioneering farmers. After farms were laid out, the Dutch Reformed Church established a church on the farm, Tintern. Farmer Jim Vorster agreed to the establishment of a village on condition that 100 plots were sold and that it was named after the prime minister of the Cape, Cecil John Rhodes. The plots were duly sold and Rhodes was founded on 16 September 1891.

Over the years the village has seen its fair share of strife and hardship. During the Anglo Boer War it was invaded 29 times.

Later the village's agricultural fortunes declined to the point where, in the 1970s, it was virtually a ghost town. However, the worldwide "hippie" phenomenon saved the day. People looking for an environment in which to "make love, not war" settled here, literally living off the land. Then came the tourism phase, coupled with the region's reputation for great trout fishing, and the town largely depends on tourism to stay afloat.



Acquiring a property in Rhodes has evolved greatly from the depressing 1970s.

Back then, houses were sold for whatever was owed in rates and taxes, and some were virtually given away.

But by 1987, things were changing. A medium-sized house retailed for up to R30 000, and by the mid-nineties that value had doubled to around R60 000. Today the same properties sell for about R400 000. Sadly, this escalation has also resulted in more out-of-town owners who only visit the village occasionally for holidays, and fewer permanent residents.

The one-stop information centre in the main street can tell you where to stay, where to eat, what to eat, and even what road conditions are like and the travelling time to the nearest towns.

Fuel supply is a problem in Rhodes, so check about availability when you plan to

visit. Also check about the condition of the mountain passes. The spectacular Naudes Nek is a bucket list kind of pass to drive, and the Tenahead Mountain Lodge, as well as the Tiffendell Ski Resort, are about an hour's drive from Rhodes. Note that it is not advisable to use a vehicle with low ground clearance on these passes. **LW**

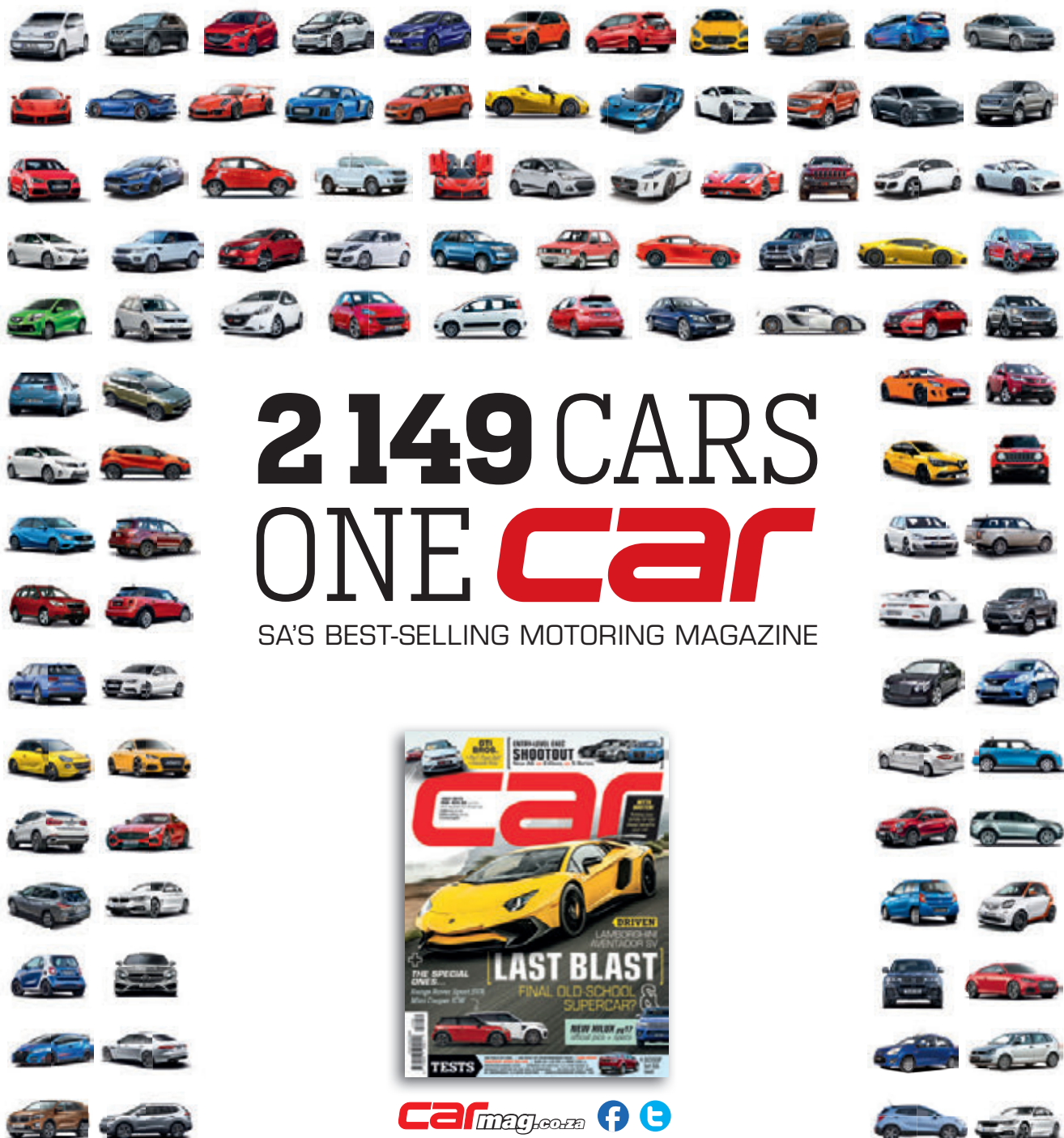


Susan Kölz with her prized Toggenburg goats, all the way from Switzerland.

#### More information


Contact Petro at the Information Centre: e-mail [contact@rhodesinfo.co.za](mailto:contact@rhodesinfo.co.za) or visit [www.rhodesinfo.co.za](http://www.rhodesinfo.co.za). If you are looking for a place to stay, you need look no further than Dave Walker's Walkerbouts Inn ([www.walkerbouts.co.za](http://www.walkerbouts.co.za))







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NIGHT DRIVE

At Se Gat

# Dark adventure on an island

There are a few tough 4x4 trails out there and At Se Gat is definitely one of them. But what happens when you tackle some of the obstacles after the sun has set?

Text and photography: Johan Swift



**There can be** no doubt that At Se Gat 4x4 trail near Brits in the North West Province has become renowned for its technical and challenging routes. They include various types of terrain, ranging from soft sand, river crossings and mud holes to rocky, mountainous obstacles.

Despite its formidable reputation, a night drive was recently arranged to show that, over and above the myriad challenges, there are sections that offer the less experienced driver in a standard 4x4 vehicle the opportunity to enjoy an absolutely awesome and adventurous trail.

For this event, the special route included several river crossings, breathtaking scenery and an exciting and engaging narrow road that crosses an island in the Crocodile River. You may have driven this route during the day, but at night it becomes a different ball game altogether.

A driver's briefing early in the evening gave the rules for the event, as well as an overview of what was to be expected. Then the convoy lined up for departure, starting with the first river crossing of about 20m.

All the river crossings were narrow but had a solid, rocky base. The drivers were guided

by poles and rocks to ensure that no one accidentally took the wrong line. Fortunately, the river was low and, at most, deep enough to cover just half the wheel height of the average vehicle.

In hosting a night drive at a track like At Se Gat, the organisers have to take extra precautions to ensure there is a large enough room for error. The route has to provide elements of surprise, beautiful scenery and technical challenges, but all within limits and with proper guidance for the participants.

As this was the first night event held at At Se Gat, we had to ensure that safety came



The convoy makes its way across the first river crossing. It would be one of many on the "dark island adventure".



## NIGHT DRIVE

### At Se Gat



Above left: This vehicle got stuck when the roads became muddy and slippery, partly because the surface had been churned up by the vehicles ahead. Above right: Dionne Harber of Ruggedize helps Johan Lubbe recover his vehicle from a slippery rock section.

first, as it always should. We therefore chose the island route, which offers a lot of scenic value and exhibits a landscape reminiscent of an island. We also arranged for marshals to guide drivers through some of the more challenging sections, though these were kept to a minimum for this initial event.

Soon after the vehicles set off into the night, the first challenging obstacle was encountered. At the driver's briefing, it was recommended that soft-roaders and vehicles with a relatively low chassis height go first, as the trail would become wet and slippery after the first few vehicles had passed through.

It didn't take long for the drivers to be surprised by the unpredictability of the route. The trail soon became quite slippery, turning even the slightest axle twister into an obstacle to be reckoned with.

As the trail crossed different sections of the island, the apparently encroaching trees and tall reeds made it feel like a real adventure. A lot of time was spent taking photographs of the convoy and testing those aftermarket LED light bars and spotlights that one seldom gets the opportunity to use properly, unless

you regularly drive at night in somewhat uncivilised territory.

With the help of two generous sponsors, Efficient LED Lighting and Ruggedize, both of which specialise in off-road accessories, parts of the island route and river crossings were lit up with their products, making for some breathtaking scenes as the convoy passed through.

The island route included an area with some axle twisters and a bed of rock that got fairly tricky if you failed to take the right line. To make matters more interesting, a small stream flows over parts of it, so it is easy to get stuck.

The main island route is usually a grade 2-3 rating, but it also has many cross roads and play areas for the more experienced off-road enthusiast.

This is also the case for other parts of the 4x4 trail at At Se Gat, where experienced drivers and capable vehicles get to take on rougher obstacles along otherwise mild and less challenging main routes.

As could be expected in a novel event like this, there were both experienced and novice drivers. Armand Schaap in his Jeep Wrangler

Rubicon was keen to take on some of the more challenging obstacles and soon diverted away from the convoy to tackle part of the river bed that has a tricky exit.

It took just over two hours for the 22 vehicles to complete the night drive. The remainder of the evening was spent discussing the night's adventures over a braai, and sharing moments captured on camera.

Some enthusiasts bravely continued playing in the sand and mud sections along the river bank. The evening ended well, with a lot of interest being shown in future night drives.

Attie Rademeyer, owner and manager of At Se Gat 4x4, has committed to arranging regular night events in future. **LW**



For more information, visit [www.atsegat.co.za](http://www.atsegat.co.za), or follow the programme on Facebook.



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## 4X4 TRAIL HEIDELBERG

The Heidelberg trail offers 4x4 enthusiasts some rough and tough challenges. However, there are plenty of escape routes, so visitors can bypass the more difficult sections.

# Go BIG in Heidelberg!



Mention a rough-and-tough 4x4 trail in Heidelberg, about 75km along the N3 highway from Johannesburg, and some hardcore enthusiasts will respond with a knowing nod of approval. Although there are some moderate sections, this trail caters mostly for grade 4 drivers. Yep, it's a right old 4x4 challenge!

**Text:** Danie Botha **Photographs:** Bridgestone SA

**Rocks, mud, old** quarry-style climbs and descents, pock-marked with ditches and dongas, and then some more rocks – it's all in a day's work at the Heidelberg 4x4 trail.

Situated close to the town, the venue also caters for off-road bikers, but there are clearly demarcated separate "roads" for bikes and 4x4s.

Let's start with the rocky mountain track. The section should not be tackled in a

standard 4x4 with "pavement" rather than trail qualifications. You need a spotter to guide you through the tough sections, but the trail can certainly be negotiated safely if you have a good spotter and a circumspect right foot. Here that old adage of "as slow as possible, as fast as necessary" rings true.

Although we have not had the pleasure of experiencing it yet, the old hands of Heidelberg

tell tales of an extreme rocky section where few drivers dare go. In fact, they say this section is like a mini Baboons Pass (the very rocky pass in Lesotho) and that one should drive there only in a vehicle that is sufficiently lifted and has plenty of other 4x4 tricks.

When you encounter the slippery climbs on the gravel section around the centrally located mud hole, you definitely need a fair

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helping of right foot to scale the obstacles. Choosing the correct line and rounding that off with just the right amount of momentum is the key to success.

Ah, the mud hole. The gooey site can keep enthusiasts busy for hours as they attempt this crossing, then that one, then have to recover a buddy or be recovered. If you are looking for some mud to play in, the Heidelberg plug is pretty good.

There is another section of rock climbing on the north-western hill, with some tight tracks and one particularly daunting rock to clamber over.

The Heidelberg trail is best not tackled alone. It is recommended that you take at least one other 4x4 along so that you can help each other if necessary.

All in all, if there are no major recoveries to deal with or prolonged photography sessions on the route, it should take you about two hours to complete all the tracks.



There are a few very rocky sections on the route.

## THE FACTS

- **NAME:** Heidelberg 4x4 trail
- **LOCATION:** About 10km from Heidelberg
- **GPS:** S26 34' 41.75" / E28 20' 57.51"
- **ACCOMMODATION:** Camping, with ablutions
- **FOOD & BEVERAGE:** None at the venue
- **DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** Medium (grade 3) to extremely difficult (grade 5)
- **VEHICLE REQUIRED:** Most 4x4s will be comfortable on the majority of obstacles (especially with an experienced spotter). Some sections (like in the infamous rock section the greybeards whisper about) require a vehicle with higher-than-standard clearance, adequate approach and departure angles, and locking differentials.
- **ROUTE DURATION:** If you skip the really bad rocks – as most visitors do – you can complete the track in about two hours.
- **PRICE:** R150 per vehicle and R20 per person
- **UNIQUE TOUCHES:** If you want to tackle some big rocks but don't have time to go to Lesotho, this trail's challenge may do it for you. Just remember the kidney belt if you drive an SFA Hilux! Besides the standard ups and downs, another attraction is the mud plug.
- **GOOD:** A tough challenge without being Camel Trophy tough, if you get the drift. So yes, it's no walk in the park, but if you know your 4x4 stuff and drive with your brain and not a heavy right foot, you can get through here in a stock Land Rover Disco 3.
- **NOT SO GOOD:** Warning: if you think you know it all and don't need anyone spotting for you on the rough sections of the mountain track, you may leave the venue with a few extra character marks (dents and scratches) on your 4x4.
- **VERDICT:** Only an hour's drive from Johannesburg, this trail offers both experienced and inexperienced enthusiasts a lot of off-road bang for their buck. Rocks, mud and quarries, and some obstacles that have been a hot topic around many a camp fire, ensure that there is something for everyone. There are escape routes around most of the more challenging tests. Overall, this is one of our favourite 4x4 tracks.
- **CONTACT:** Henry @ 072 142-9685
- **WEBSITE:** None



Above: Big and small 4x4s play at the Heidelberg trail, which is only about an hour's drive from Johannesburg. Below: The standard trail takes about two hours to complete.



As one 4x4 enthusiast on the Nissan Off-road Forum remarked, "it's more like driving one big two-hour obstacle rather than lots of small ones." Yep, there's a challenge around every corner!

You can camp at the venue and there are limited but good quality ablutions. There is a plunge pool to cool down in during the summer months, and a jungle gym for the kids. Since the venue is so close to the Reef, most visitors go through for the day.

The nearest take-away shop is in Heidelberg, about 10km away, so it is best to self-cater, particularly as there are on-site braai facilities.

That's the Heidelberg 4x4 trail, situated on the Lammergeier Farm. It's an excellent destination for Gauteng trail enthusiasts. **LW**



A near standard Nissan Navara clocks some airtime on one of the steep climbs.

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# Taste adventure



Leisure Wheels 4x4 Safaris will offer shorter safaris to its readers in 2015. We are busy developing some interesting itineraries on the Wild Coast, the mountains in the Eastern Cape, the West Coast and other exiting destinations within South Africa.

## NAMIBIA

### Lüderitz to Walvis Bay

**2015:** 15 – 21 Aug, 2 – 8 Oct, 7 – 13 Nov, 16 – 22 Dec

Places visited on the way include Silvia Hill, Meob Bay, Conception Bay and Sandwich Bay. Desert wildlife, spectacular scenery, untouched beaches, abandoned mining settlements, miles of sand driving and shipwrecks are some of the attractions along the way.

▶▶ R8 250pp.

### Faces of the Namib – Sand Sea

**2015:** 24 – 29 May, 02 – 07 Oct, 30 Aug – 4 Sep

Exploring the central Namib – discover an untamed wilderness with beauty as unique and diverse as only the Namib can offer.

▶▶ R8 500pp.

## PONDOLAND

### Wildcoast

**2015:** 23 – 30 October

Pondoland, on the Transkei Wild Coast, is one of the destinations that so many people would like to visit, but know so little about, and do not want to go there on their own. Pondoland, is a land of wild cattle and wilder beauty, of waterfalls plunging directly into the Indian Ocean, of colonies of vultures nesting above undisturbed forest gorges, and a beautiful but rugged coastline which boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in Southern Africa.

▶▶ R 5 400 pp (subject to change)

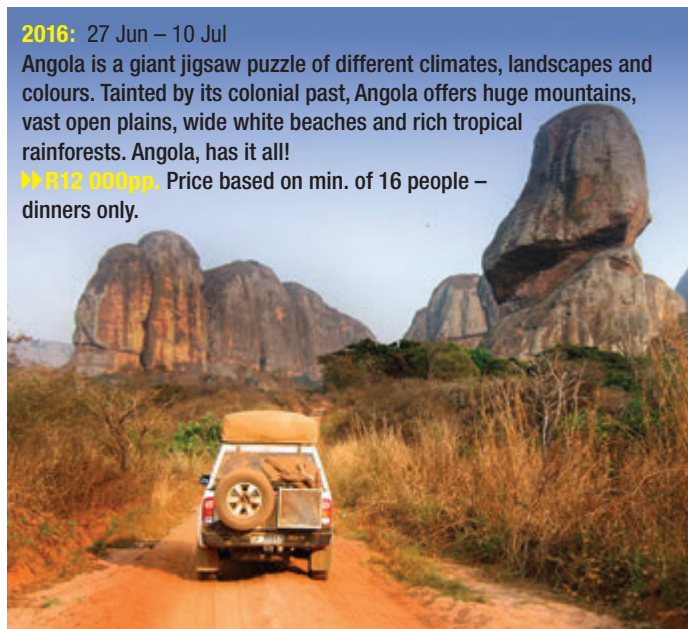


## ANGOLA

**2016:** 27 Jun – 10 Jul

Angola is a giant jigsaw puzzle of different climates, landscapes and colours. Tainted by its colonial past, Angola offers huge mountains, vast open plains, wide white beaches and rich tropical rainforests. Angola, has it all!

▶▶ R12 000pp. Price based on min. of 16 people – dinners only.



## ZAMBIA

### Zambia with Zest

**2015:** 22 Augustus – 11 September **2016:** 29 August – 18 September

Zambia is one of the undiscovered gems of Africa and this safari will take you to its hidden places. They include South Luangwa, Luambe, North Luangwa, Kapishya Hot Springs, and the North and South of Kafue. And, of course, there is also a visit to a world-famous natural wonder – the Victoria Falls.

▶▶ R15 800pp (subject to change).

## AFRICA COMBO

### Big Five to Big Blue

**2015:** 9 Oct – 27 Oct 18. **2016:** 18 April – 5 May

The diversity of this safari through five African countries is special. The itinerary takes in the world-renowned Big Five game reserves, Chobe in Botswana and South Luangwa in Zambia. You will also visit the breathtaking Lake Malawi, the Cahora Bassa Dam and the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe.

R10 200 pp (subject to change).



## ZAMBIA



### Liuwa Plains

**2015:** 8 – 20 November **2016:** 7 November – 19 November

This safari is a combination of the wildebeest migration in Liuwa Plains and the migration of the “Flying Foxes” or straw coloured fruit bats in Kasanka National Park. Few people have ventured into the Liuwa Plain due to its relative inaccessibility. However the prolific birdlife, the wildebeest migration and the story of Lady Liuwa, the “last lioness”, makes it one of Africa’s last true wildernesses and a huge attraction to the bush fundi. During this time of year five million straw-coloured fruit bats also take up residence in one hectare of Kasanka National Park’s Mushitu swamp forest. This is a spectacle not to be missed and one of Africa’s greatest wildlife spectacles, if not the world’s.

►► **R9 900 pp** (subject to change)

## ZIMBABWE

### Cross-country expedition

**2015:** 24 June – 7 July **2016:** 27 June – 10 July

This safari allows you to experience all facets of Zimbabwe – from camping on the banks of the Zambezi to the luxury chalets at Troutbeck Inn in the Eastern Highlands.

The itinerary includes the Matopos, Hwange National Park, a ferry crossing on Lake Kariba, the Mana Pools, Harare, Nyanga National Park in the Eastern Highlands and the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

►► **R15 100pp** (subject to change).

## REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**2016:** August/September. (3 weeks – final dates to be confirmed). Visiting the modern day ‘Dorsland Trekkers’ at Dolisie in the Republic of Congo. This promises to be unforgettable adventure via Angola, DRC (just crossing the western part), towards Cabinda and exploring the Republic of Congo? There are various exciting destinations with very little organised ‘self-drive tourism’. Go in search of the western mountain Gorillas.

►► **Price on application.**

►► For more information on any of these tours or to book your trip, contact Avril Muller well in advance on 021 530 3186 or [avril@ramsaymedia.co.za](mailto:avril@ramsaymedia.co.za)

## TANZANIA



### Wildebeest Migration

**2015:** 14 July – 12 August **2016:** 18 July – 16 August

This safari offers a once-in-a lifetime experience – the beginning of the annual wildebeest migration in the Serengeti, also called the “Birth of Life”. There is also a visit to Lake Malawi and the Ngorongoro Crater. The journey leads us through Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana.

►► **R6000 per person** (Guide fee only and subject to change)

## ZAMBIA

### Tanganyika Waterfall Route

**2015:** 25 May – 14 June **2016:** 30 May – 18 June

We believe in innovation and always want to offer something new and exciting, and Zambia also never fails to surprise. This safari takes you to the most spectacular waterfalls Zambia can offer. From the impressive Lumangwe falls to the smaller, but equally beautiful Chisimba – and Mutumuna falls, the route also includes the world’s longest freshwater, the second largest and second deepest lake, Lake Tanganyika.

►► **R11 700per person**



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# The mountain pass challenge

Explore Africa Adventures is developing new safari routes in SA. The company completed a safari to Pondoland in March – featured in the June issue of *Leisure Wheels* – and is now exploring the potential of the Eastern Cape highlands

Text and photography: André van Vuuren

**The Eastern Cape** highlands, also known as “the wild side of the Drakensberg”, is growing in popularity as a safe and relatively undiscovered mountain destination with spectacular scenery and challenging gravel mountain passes.

Our route initially took us from Maclear to Naude’s Nek, which has a summit of 2920m, making it the highest mountain pass in SA.

The next stop was in the village of Rhodes.

It has a colourful history dating back to the 1880s and features many Victorian buildings. In 1997, the entire village was proclaimed as a conservation area.

The road from Rhodes to Tiffindell ski resort is scenic and steep. You don’t need a 4x4, but you do need controlled power, particularly where the cement strips zigzag their way up the most extreme section of the Carlislehoek Pass.

Approaching Tiffindell, we passed the highest

point in the Cape (3001m above sea level). The peak is known by local tribes as Makhollo (Great Mother), but white settlers named it Ben McDhui after the mountain in Scotland. These days, residents affectionately refer to it as Ben Mac.

Tiffindell ski resort was established in 1993 to give South Africans an opportunity to ski at home, and also to give foreign tourists the chance to embark on the unique experience of



The Naude’s Nek Pass rises to 2920m above sea level.





Right, top to bottom:  
The scenic Lundeane's Nek Pass.  
The red-roofed Rhodes Hotel.  
Dave Walker and Susan K  lz of  
Walkerbouts in Rhodes.  
The town of Lady Grey.



skiing in Africa.

After traversing the high plateau, Volunteershoek Pass winds its way down to the farming community of Wartrail.

The road is narrow with some precipitous drop-offs. Just after the steepest section, there are wonderful views of Halstone Krans and the farmlands in the valley below. Rock formations along this section are intriguing, the most notable being Funnystone, which lends its name to a nearby farm.

The scenery is nothing short of spectacular. Lundeane's Nek connects this part of the Eastern Cape to the Lesotho border at Telebridge.

We passed the remote Lundeane's Nek police station, which is primarily tasked with preventing rustlers from taking stolen livestock across the border into Lesotho, and to prevent smugglers from bringing dagga and diamonds in the opposite direction.

Just beyond the police station, the summit of the pass provides fantastic panoramic views of the Maloti Mountains.

Explore Africa is busy putting together an itinerary for this area. The plan is for the tour group to meet in Lady Grey, where we will spend the first night at the Mountain View Country Inn. The trip will probably last five days, and accommodation will be provided in guesthouses and B&Bs. **LW**



A detailed itinerary, as well as dates for 2016, will be available soon. Meanwhile, to be first in the queue for the ultimate driving adventure, combining spectacular mountain views with some of the highest passes in SA, contact [corne@explore-africa.co.za](mailto:corne@explore-africa.co.za) or [avril@ramsaymedia.co.za](mailto:avril@ramsaymedia.co.za). Come and see if you can complete the "Mountain Pass Challenge"!





# Masters of mud

It's an extreme 4x4 competition that makes the famed Camel Trophy of old look a little bit like a pavement-parking parade. But in the end the event was dominated by 4x4s that started life as Land Rovers. This is... the 2015 Croatia Trophy!

**Text:** Robb Pritchard **Photographs:** Robb Pritchard and Gedmantas Kropis

**Drive south through** Zagreb until the last village before the Bosnian border and there is a sacred field that dozens of top 4x4 crews make a pilgrimage to at the end of every April.

From the far corners of Europe they come to pitch tents ready for a week long homage in the deep woods to the gods of mud. High priest, officiating over the many muddy sacrifices, is the venerable Igor Bozikov, now directing a 15-year-old event, and it was all smiles as the 55 teams were lined up in the village centre to show the locals that we are, to outward appearances at least, all normal people.

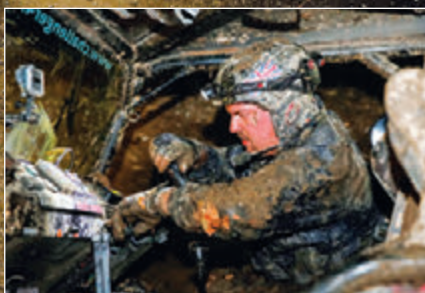
Israeli flags flutter against the sunset sky, but so too do ones from Russia, as despite the frosty atmosphere the mainstream media tries to create, seven teams made the five-day trek here, to be joined by Maltese, Italian, Bosnian, French, Dutch and British crews, among many others. There were 16 countries in all, making it the most internationally represented event of its kind.

If you like mud,  
you'll definitely  
enjoy the Croatia  
Trophy!





Above: It's not really a case of whether you are going to get stuck, but rather when you are going to get stuck. And how deep. Below, top to bottom: Co-drivers have it particularly good – they can go for regular swims; Oh dear, where's that in-car entertainment system gone?; Er, I think we're stuck. Again.



Teams were split into two classes, Adventure for the not so modified cars and Trophy for everything else, and were gathered up five at a time to be thrown into the tight and twisty opening prologue.

Last year two crews entertained the crowd by rolling just a few metres from the start but this time Israel's Ira Avni and Malta's Adrian Bezzina turned the tables by blasting around first and third. In 2014 Ira only managed to finish one stage and promised Igor he'd come back to beat him... and so this was one tick in the first of eight boxes.

The abandoned forests along the border with Bosnia aren't just big and empty. They are full of ravines, rivers, meadows and bogs and even if – unbelievably – it didn't rain for the whole week, the ground is still saturated with snow melt... and very muddy! But as well as the popular ritual of sending co-drivers to wrap a strap around the altar of the winch point, a massive element of the Croatia Trophy is navigation. With just a roadbook and markers painted on trees to find the way, there is nothing in the Middle East that can prepare you, so it wasn't a big surprise that the Land Rover with tractor tyres wasn't the first through. Breaking the winch and having two punctures didn't help!

Ira 1, Croatian forest 1

Also starting the hardest way possible was Stefan Malia and Alistair Caruana in their Kamoy buggy. An oil filter housing got ripped off and because it was a specialist part, and also a bank holiday weekend, the only way for them to keep going was for a friend to fly to Italy with it as hand luggage and for them to drive a 1400km round-trip to pick it up. Two

maximum times to start with meant that they were a long way from a good result, but they kept on going and the Carl Reuter Trophy for fair play was eventually the just reward.

On paper it looked to be one of the hottest events in years, with four former winners and a winning car all lined up with serious intentions. But the first 50km stage sorted all that out quickly enough. Reigning champion Christian Poprask in his Mitsubishi-powered proto, broke his power take-off (PTO) winch and took maximum penalties. Marc Eyckens also broke a winch and the May Day holiday meant it would be days before a fabricator would open shop, so it was back home early for the Austrian double winner.

Hungary's Szilard Magyar, in his stunning BMW 3-Series bodied, independent suspension, Mercedes-powered creation, would have been faster if the fan belt hadn't come off, but incredibly, despite this being the first event for this unique vehicle, it was the only problem he had for the whole week. Watching the BMW grille smash through the low-hanging branches was a fantastic sight... and the dashboard still has the walnut trim!

Being 10th on the leaderboard is nothing to post on Facebook, but it took all of 10km for Team Gigglespin's Jim Marsden to pass nine other cars and set about picking a way around the slowest Adventure class cars that were sharing the same track.

As Szilard struggled in the woods somewhere off-track, he even had time to pull a grateful Suzuki out of a ditch.

The Croatia Trophy is so hard and technical that it is generally considered that only the best of the best do well here, so winning the



Co-drivers, dragging their steeds through the river? Nope, just dragging the winch rope to find an anchor point to winch the steeds through the sticky mud.



# EXTREME 4X4 COMPETITION

## CROATIA TROPHY



opening stage by over an hour let everyone know straight away who they had to beat.

It wasn't all plain sailing, though. Leaves got into the radiator cowl on Day 2 and overheated the Chevy LS3 V8 so much they had to stop and rely on the water from other competitors to keep going. In a perfect example of just how internationally represented this event is, water bottles were donated from Russian, Hungarian, German and Austrian teams.

One of the most technically advanced extreme 4x4s you will find anywhere is Victor Khoroshavtsev's TRX6 built by Alexi Golubev from the Russian Off-road Wolves team. Audi-powered, it has self-made suspension and portals made of aluminium and titanium. It even floats! In Golubev's hands two years ago, it dominated the event but while Victor perhaps doesn't have the same driving skills he has some pretty competent mechanics. After



Above, left to right: The action continues into the night... patience, recovery skills and teamwork are vital to success; When the mechanical bits play up, human power does the trick. Left: Boet, do you really want me to get out and get my feet dirty?

it spent 10 minutes on its roof after a roll they drove to the campsite, drained the turbo of engine oil and sent him back on his way.

But it was another Russian crew who were in the hunt for the win. Andrei Ponomarev, at his first attempt here, was hampered by a very strange issue – his 300TDi engined, Volvo Laplander axled proto was designed for much tougher conditions. "Here you can drive for some kilometres on normal tracks and then get to some obstacle. In Russia there are no tracks in the stages, just obstacles!"

With Jim struggling with overheating and co-driver Wayne Smith, fresh from Australia, exploring some random off-the-book trails, he



Teams working together form a part of the Croatia Trophy formula, otherwise the 4x4s would never make it through some of the sections!



decided to attack... but broke a driveshaft.

The stages are plenty hard enough with four fully functioning wheels, so trying to get through with just three is a serious disadvantage and the hour-and-a-half lost put him back in the clutches of Szilard and the friendly Belgian Ruel brothers in their 104' Land Rover.

Then it was a couple of days of typical Croatia Trophy. Carrying on the unique idea of bringing many different nationalities together, there is Trophy Day where five crews have to work as one to get through different tasks.

There is a brutal night stage, where roof lights cut through the darkness, run through a meadow that instantly turns into a huge bog, and the famous Circuit race. It sounds innocent enough, but it is a real car breaker. Something happens when 10 cars are let off the start line at once, 50m from a small opening! What happens is chaos... and chaos is something at which many teams seem to excel. But after all this, Jim had extended his lead by only 10 minutes. A half an hour lead in the Croatian forests is nothing, and back in the next "real" stage he lost the way for almost an hour.

Fortunately it was a particularly hard stage and many others had their own troubles... so the lead, with two days to go, was up to over two hours.

All done? Not in the Croatia Trophy. At 130km/h, with a main road fast approaching, a stab of the "coward pedal" didn't slow the car. A brake line had been cut and they didn't have a pipe flanging tool in the car. Somehow, with just a screwdriver and a hammer, they managed a repair that lasted to the end of the stage! Another lesson – it's not about getting through the stages without a problem. Doing well is about how you get through fixing all the problems you will inevitably have.

And then, just a 40km "easy" last stage, the finish across a big river. The Ruel brothers were looking at a great third, but blew their engine. Szilard only had 11 minutes to make up for second, so pushed and was duly first home, but Ponomarev was only five minutes further back and had started way down the field.

A quick roll in front of Poprask and four flat tyres as he crossed the line couldn't stop him from getting a great second. And he has learned a few things to make his car better suited for next year.

As the Euro 4x4 Parts flag was waved, Szilard's feat of getting to the podium in a brand-new and radically engineered car was a much lauded one.

Ira bought his monstrous Land Rover home and finished seven of the eight stages.

And then a beautiful-sounding Land Rover came into view. It needed a couple of tugs of



A BMW 4x4? Well, kind of. It's a custom-built machine powered by a Mercedes engine, with a BMW 3-Series body. Below, left to right: When in doubt, give it some right foot!; Dr Livingstone, we presume? Navigation is a major challenge, and finding your way through a jungle can get tricky. Bottom: Running repairs are part and parcel of the competition. And this was an easy one!



the winch to get across the river, but then Jim powered out of the water to take his second win, although there is a slight discrepancy in the final time. It is my understanding that the clock stops when the car and both team members get across the line. The fact that Jim left co-driver Wayne to wade out of the river by himself meant that there should have been at least another minute added. But when you win by nearly three hours, I guess it doesn't really matter too much!

The Adventure class was once again dominated by Russian Victor Stolyachuk in his Land Rover 90. He took the honours for an unprecedented fourth straight time. **LW**

### See it here! See it here!

The official DVD will be out in June and it will be an excellent film with 50% of the profits going back to the Croatia Trophy. For further details, contact Robb at [robb4x4@gmail.com](mailto:robb4x4@gmail.com). To find out more about the Croatia Trophy, visit [www.croatia-trophy.org](http://www.croatia-trophy.org).



# Shorty with a punch!



Take one classic Toyota Land Cruiser Prado "shorty". Throw out that 3,4-litre V6 and fit a slightly more powerful engine, like a six-litre Vortec V8 L96. Then kit it out with all kinds of 4x4 trickery to turn it into one of the most formidable off-roaders in the county. This is the story of Frans Bouwer's J90 Toyota Prado.

Text and photographs: Danie Botha

**It's got 260 kW** of V8 muscle, with a glorious sound track, and 37-inch Cooper mud terrain tyres on specialised beadlock rims that allow pressures as low as 0,4 bar. Even more tricks than the average Fifa official, and more gadgets than those on display at the annual Nerds are Us Forever convention.

This is Capetonian Frans Bouwer's toy, and his pride and joy, too.

It all started when Frans heard about a special J90 for sale. It was built to compete in the extreme Australian Outback 4x4 competition – a contest so tough that the rules stipulate that vehicles must be fitted with winches that can hoist the vehicle up a vertical surface, supporting its full weight.

"Check here," says Frans, as we examine the Prado in the parking area of the Atlantis Dunes, near Cape Town. "This is a six horsepower Giggiepin motor connected to a Warn 8274i winch. It's a hardcore competition winch, rated at 18 tons."

He points to the massive winch and Giggiepin business, mounted in a competition style bull bar that also sports six powerful KC spotlights.

In off-road events, at the sharpest end of the field, suspension



Dune driving takes on a new meaning in this spectacular Prado. Owner Frans Bouwer christened it Tyson. Above: Frans has a peek at the L96 V8 engine that delivers 260 kW. Yep, still there!



systems are a vital part of winning or losing. In the front, the Prado has a Fox coil-over and triple bypass set-up with external gas canisters in the engine bay. The rear suspension comprises Old Man Emu shocks and springs.

The Cruiser drivetrain is like a Smartie box of tough Toyota parts. This includes a Cruiser Series 105 five-speed manual gearbox, a Cruiser 79 transfer case, a full-floater rear axle from a Cruiser 75 and a Cruiser 105 solid front axle.

Keeping the axles in check in extreme conditions are two ARB air lockers – one for each differential. A top quality 160-litre Fini compressor keeps the lockers charged with air and also supplies the on-board tyre inflation system with air.

The cabin has been stripped out to save weight, and there is a full FIA specification roll cage, and bucket seats with racing harnesses. In the cabin are two Garmin navigation systems, a 75-litre fridge and a C-Tek dual battery charging and monitoring system -- linked to no less than three batteries!

The coolest trick is the on-board bilge pump, in case the cabin takes on water during deep crossings. And talking about water crossings, a specialised snorkel keeps water out of the engine.

But talk is cheap, and action speaks louder than words. So with the Cooper tyres deflated to that seemingly impossible 0,4 bar, Frans fires up the six-litre small-block V8 engine, hooks first gear and gently takes off in the soft sand. We amble across a few small dunes while the L96 engine and the running gear warm up.

“Are you ready?” asks Frans. When I nod, he boots that V8, and the sands of Atlantis part like the water parted for Moses.

The engine’s ponies always seem at the ready. Whenever Frans calls upon them to drag the Prado up a dune that looks impossible to scale, they gallop into action, immediately, beautifully.

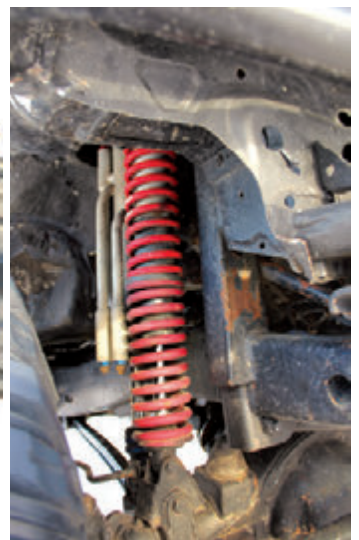
Frans and the Prado are members of the infamous Friday afternoon club – a bunch of 4x4 fanatics who meet weekly at Atlantis for some sand blasting, and dune drifting. The latter does not entail spinning doughnut circles in the sand. Rather, it requires one 4x4 being drifted sideways on the slip-face of a large dune. Clearly, this type of driving requires plenty of horsepower, grip and flotation, not to mention skills and experience. It can very easily end in tears if you lack one or more of the mentioned attributes.

Thankfully, Frans Bouwer is one of the most skilled sand driving pilots around, and his 260 kW Prado is one heck of a sand blasting machine.



Frans and his Aussie Outback competition Prado (it did actually compete in Australia) in the Atlantis Dunes. Frans is a member of the “world famous Atlantis Dunes Friday Avie Club”. The boys and their powerful toys have fun in the dunes every Friday afternoon.

Far right: Trick Fox front suspension. Right: The 37-inch Cooper mud tyres on special beadlock rims that allow Frans to run at 0,4 bar. Below, left to right: The shorty Prado means pure business; Six spotlights and a winch that is rated at 18 tons are attached to the Prado’s competition bar.



Later, sipping on an ice-cold drink, I ponder the question of reliability, what with the nature of dune drifting and all.

Frans smiles knowingly. “Ja, look, we drive the vehicles to their limits, playing in the sand. Sure, things can go wrong. In the Prado’s case we’ve had some clutch issues with all the horses being sent to the four wheels with the diff locks engaged. It puts a huge load on the drivetrain,

especially with the 260 kW of power.”

But you can see in his eyes that this little detail hardly matters. For Frans and his retro ride gone big, it’s all in a day’s fun.

A sticker on the passenger side of the cabin sums up this Prado most eloquently:

Passenger rules:

- 1) No crying or screaming
- 2) No touching buttons or levers
- 3) Hold on...

Nuff said! 



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# The Leisure Wheels Sentinel

NEWS YOU NEED TO KNOW



Free

July 2015

1

## Jeep Renegade arrives in SA

Jeep's latest compact creation has been given a very appropriate name. The Renegade departs markedly from the old Jeep recipe. Not only is it being launched in 2WD only (4WD versions will arrive later in the year) but it also rides on the underpinnings of a Fiat.

In SA, the Renegade is available only in Limited trim level and 2WD. Longitude and Trailhawk models will arrive in September. The only engine, for now, is the fuel-efficient 103 kW 1.4-litre MultiAir powertrain with manual transmission.

Interior gadgets include the

UConnect system with a 5-inch or 6.5-inch touchscreen with navigation and Bluetooth and hands-free phone. The Renegade Limited features a 7-inch colour instrument cluster display – the largest in the segment.

Safety and security were at the forefront in the development of the all-new Renegade. It offers an array of advanced safety features, including six airbags, ESC with Electronic Rollover Mitigation (ERM), Parkview rear camera, Forward Collision Warning-Plus, LaneSense Departure Warning-Plus and Adaptive Cruise Control.



Pricing starts at R375 990, including a 3-year/100 000km warranty and class leading 6-year/100 000km maintenance plan.

## Support for rhino orphans

Graffiti, a marketing services company in the field of transit branding, has used its vehicle wrapping technique to help raise awareness of First Car Rental's campaign for the Limpopo-based Rhino Orphanage.

Responding to a request for support, Graffiti brand-wrapped four vehicles at the heart of First Car Rental's national campaign, which recently ended. As the name suggests, the Rhino Orphanage cares for and rehabilitates orphans traumatised by poaching.

A wrap for the vehicles was designed to look like a mother and baby rhino, with interactive social media messaging and a call to the public in the artwork to "Post your Selfie & Win".

Melissa Storey, First Car Rental marketing executive, commented: "There are very few wrapping companies that would have been able to execute some of the complicated designs that we have asked Graffiti to produce over the years. They are a superb supplier and we were delighted that they supported this truly worthwhile campaign."

For more information, visit [www.Graffiti.co.za](http://www.Graffiti.co.za).



## Old Motor Club show set for August

The pride of SA's national antique, veteran and vintage car and motorcycle collections will be on show on Sunday, 2 August, at the Pretoria Old Motor Club's (POMC) exhibition.

Popular cars from 1950 to 1980 as well as "muscle cars" will be displayed. Collectors from more than 100 motor clubs across SA will display more than 2000 vehicles.

The exhibition takes place at the Zwartkops race track and will feature a special display of rare vintage cars and some of the world's most sought-after collectors' cars.

Members of the POMC will exhibit more than 70 cars while the Buick Club will celebrate its 15th



anniversary with a special exhibition.

There will be a flea market with more than 100 stalls and 30 commercial exhibitors will also participate.

Food and refreshments will be on sale, but visitors are welcome to bring their own picnic baskets. The gates open at 08:00.

For more information, visit [www.pomc.co.za](http://www.pomc.co.za).



## Mercedes reveals facelifted GLE

Mercedes-Benz has released details of its new GLE mid-size SUV.

If the new 2016 Mercedes-Benz GLE seems familiar, that's because it is really just the old M-Class. Mercedes has renamed the popular SUV to bring it in line with all its other G-titled 4x4s.

That said, some minor tweaks have been made to this facelifted (and renamed) version of the ML. Mercedes-Benz has thoroughly revised the SUV.

Across the available engine range, fuel consumption and CO2 emissions have been reduced by

17% on average. And, for the first time, Mercedes-Benz offers a plug-in hybrid model, the GLE 500e 4MATIC, which purportedly combines maximum efficiency with outstanding performance.

The standard vehicle will be made available with two twin-

turbo petrol engines and two turbocharged diesel powertrains.

The top-of-the-line 63 AMG model features a 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 engine, which produces 410kW in standard specification and 430kW in S guise. The GLE arrives in SA later this year.



## K-Way introduces new line-up

All signs point to it being a bitterly cold winter this year, so it's nice to know that K-Way has introduced its latest line-up of cold weather and camping products.

K-Way has been designing and developing its own range of hiking boots since 2014 and their superior performance has made them a popular choice.

The Expedition Series of jackets has been tested on the highest peaks, including Everest and Kilimanjaro. If they can keep hikers warm up there, they'll certainly do a decent enough job on the frosty mornings here in SA!

K-Way's latest product line-up is available at Cape Union Mart stores nationwide. For additional information, visit [www.kway.co.za](http://www.kway.co.za).



Left: The K-Way Men's Romulus 3 in 1 Jacket sells for R2,299 and the Women's Atlas 3-in-1 Travel Jacket costs R1,999

## Battery Buddy a good companion

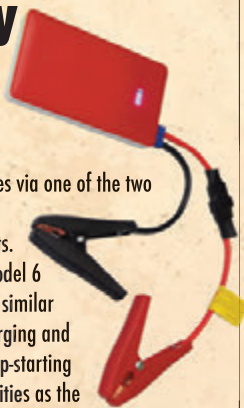
The Battery Buddy is now available in SA. There are several models. The little Model 5 houses enough power to jump start four- and six-cylinder petrol engines of up to three litres. It is ideal for charging your smartphone via its USB outlet, which has a charging rate of one percent per minute.

The Model 3 is basically a heavy-duty version of the Model 5 and packs enough power to jump start an SUV with a diesel engine. With this model, you can recharge your phone six or seven

times via one of the two USB ports.

Model 6 has similar charging and jump-starting abilities as the Model 3, but with the added benefit of being able to change the voltage output, which means you can power a laptop.

All models have powerful LED multifunction torches, which can last for up to 120 hours.



## Airflow snorkels launched in SA

Torre Automotive has launched the Airflow range of snorkels as part of its Weekend Warrior brand offering.

Leonard Chester, product manager, vehicle accessories, says the Airflow range is designed to fit different types of vehicle. "Additional benefits can be obtained from a well designed snorkel. This is where the Airflow cold air induction system provides enhanced functionality.

"Not all snorkel body designs produce a cold air induction effect, which improves fuel efficiency and engine power. We have been con-

ducting airflow studies, friction loss assessments and performance in our laboratories for many years to achieve this effect."

The Airflow snorkels are available for Toyota Hilux, Fortuner and Land Cruiser, the Ford Ranger and various Land Rover models. A snorkel for the VW Amarok will be introduced later in the year.

Distributors include Safari Centre, LA Sports - HQ, Pretoria, Namibia and Nelspruit - and other independent dealers such as Burco, Barakha, HBL, Creative Wheels and Polyguard.



## New Wilderness Safari ventures

Wilderness Safaris has announced its investment in two new lodges in Rwanda, as well as the opening of its Linkwasha Camp in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park.

In Rwanda, the 12-room Bisate Lodge will be adjacent to the Volcanoes National Park. It is a "visionary conservation and community project", with its first phase focusing on indigenous reforestation of a core 26-hectare site. This will be done in close partnership with the newly constituted 320-member Tuzamurane Cooperative.

Wilderness Safaris are also in discussions with the Rwanda Development Board to develop a lodge in the

nearby Gishwati-Mukura National Park. Just 12 guests, staying in six rustic forest cottages, will have exclusive access to the chimpanzee and golden monkey communities of Gishwati Forest.

The plan is for both lodges to open in mid-2016. They will be rated in the "Adventures" category of Wilderness Safaris camps.

Itineraries combining the two camps over five to six nights will be the perfect way to enjoy "privileged interactions" with two of Africa's ape species, and visits can be broadened to include other attractions in Rwanda.



## Cape Town has worst traffic

TomTom recently released its annual Traffic Index, highlighting the impact of traffic congestion in more than 200 cities around the world.

According to the data, evening rush hour is the most congested time of day in most countries, with bottlenecks nearly doubling journey times. In 2014, the average commuter spent an extra 100 hours a year travelling during rush hour.

However, SA is different. All major cities' statistics indicate that the morning commute as the most congested time for travelling, with Monday morning being the worst.

Globally ranked at 55, Cape Town is the most congested city in SA, with morning commutes adding up to 72% to commuting time. Johannesburg, listed at 77, is not much better with morning travel adding up to 59% to commuting time. Cape Town also has worst congestion levels in the evening,

adding 58% to travel time. In Johannesburg, the figure is 54%.

Pretoria has overtaken East London as the third most congested city in SA, with overall congestion level of 24%.

Interestingly for Gauteng, the most congested traffic day recently was 3rd February 2014, when storms led to localised floods.

"TomTom's mission is to reduce traffic congestion for everyone," says marketing manager Carey Dodd.

"Road authorities and local governments can use TomTom's traffic data to better manage traffic flow. We can help businesses plan smarter working hours to help their employees avoid the rush hour, and we give drivers the real-time traffic information and smart routing they need to avoid congested roads."



## Aprilia Caponord 1200 Rally now in SA

The new 2015 Aprilia Caponord 1200 Rally is now available at Cayenne World.

"The bike offers a level of adventure that is difficult to compete with," says Craig Langton, sales director and co-owner of the Cayenne Group. "It has the latest

Bosch electronics and a level of performance to complement its good looks."

This crossover bike features the patented semi-active Aprilla Dynamic Damping suspension system, which "reads" the road ahead and sets up the suspension

accordingly.

The Caponord is being launched with a price tag of R199 900, including a free three-year service plan.

For more information, call Cayenne World on 011 244-1900 or visit their website, Aprilia-sa.com



## Wildog launches new line of accessories

Wildog, a supplier of 4x4 accessories in SA, has introduced a new range of replacement bumpers, rock sliders and bash plates.

The replacement bumpers are for Toyota Hilux and Fortuner models and have been developed with the help of computer-aided design.

The bumper is built in three sections for simple fitment and alignment and comes standard with winch mounting, high lift jacking points, recovery points and nudge bar. They are equipped with high quality IP67 LED flood lamps and e-coated and powder coated for "superior corrosion resistance".

Off-road, the most vulnerable

part of any vehicle is the rocker panels. Factory fitted side steps, says Wildog, are manufactured of thin materials and offer little resistance against moderate impacts on off-road trails.

Wildog Accessories have engineered some of the strongest rock sliders available to protect vehicles from major impacts.

Wildog Rock Sliders also function as side steps and are equipped with high lift jacking points.

The company says its bash plates are engineered to protect expensive components and are an excellent investment for off-roaders' peace of mind.

For more information, visit [www.wildog.co.za](http://www.wildog.co.za).



## Moto Guzzi California now available in SA



Cayenne World recently launched the all-new Moto Guzzi California 1400 range, featuring eye-catching styling and a new more powerful and environmentally friendly engine.

The California Touring and Super Touring model comes in five different versions – the California 1400, the Custom, Touring 2013 and Super Touring 2015 and the popular Stone model (Italian army replica). Pricing starts at R199 999.

"No two of the same looking Moto Guzzi California's will be sold or leave the showroom. Customers can all have their exclusive special looking model," said Craig Langton, sales director of Moto Guzzi SA and co-owner of the Cayenne Group.

"We have set aside a budget for the Guzzi package. It can include various free options such as paint jobs, graphics to the side panels, back and front mud guards, tank, exhaust or a Shark helmet.

"All the new Californias will come with a free three-year service plan."

For more information, call Berto at Cayenne World (011-244-1900) or visit [www.motoguzzi.co.za](http://www.motoguzzi.co.za)



## Latest Tracks4Africa update

Tracks4Africa has introduced the latest update for its GPS Maps. The new version, called T4A GPS Maps 15.05, includes an overall road coverage increase of three percent.

The upgrade comes preloaded on a 2Gb micro SD card, ready for plug-in and navigate action on most Garmin navigation units.

Tracks4Africa processed 525 data submissions for this new version, which includes 867 974km of roads, 10 273 accommodation listings, 3661 camp sites and 134 452 points of interest. It has the most complete and detailed information on protected areas (national parks, game reserves etc.) in Africa.

For more information on the update and products available for various operating software, visit [www.tracks4africa.co.za](http://www.tracks4africa.co.za).





# A culinary extravaganza!

The Cleopatra Mountain Lodge, framed by the beautiful Drakensberg range. It's like a picture postcard!

In the foothills of the Drakensberg you will find the Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse. Besides its luxurious and exclusive lodgings and grandiose setting, the venue is renowned for its cuisine. We went for a bite

Text: Danie Botha

## Romantic. Gourmet. Getaway.

Three words that sum up the experience of Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse, situated near Highmoor National Park and the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg world heritage site.

Richard and Mouse Poynton own the world-renowned establishment, having come full international circle in creating the unique cuisine that has become Cleopatra's main attraction.

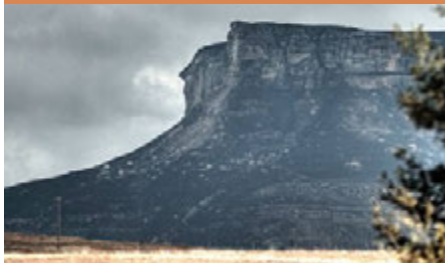
The couple were part of the so-called "country house movement" of the eighties, and started the still very popular Granny Mouse Country House in the Midlands Meander, also in KwaZulu-Natal.

They sold the Granny Mouse business in the nineties and travelled the world, visiting their children and gaining lots of culinary experience.

Richard recalls: "I used to walk into an interesting-looking restaurant in a small town in Europe, and ask if I could volunteer in the



Richard and Mouse Poynton, the brains and cooking inspiration behind Cleopatra. Below: The rock formation that is said to resemble Cleopatra's face.



kitchen. Sometimes I was sent on my merry way, but more often than not the owners and chefs had no hesitation in sharing their cuisine and the way they made it."

After many years of exploring and tasting and cooking and visiting and making new friends, the couple finally returned to SA – to a piece of family land near Highmoor Park, in the foothills of the Drakensberg. They established the Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse, limiting accommodation to 11 rooms – but what rooms they are!

Each room (or suite in some cases) is uniquely decorated according to a specific theme. They have names like the Cowboy Room, the Swedish Naturalist Room, the Postcard Room, the Darjeeling Room, and so on.

"Although we could have built more rooms, we decided to stay small and keep the experience an exclusive one," says Richard.

And judging by a guest's helicopter parked on a nearby lawn during our visit, it certainly is





rather exclusive. Prices start at R1650 per person per night, including dinner and breakfast.

Ahem, and so we get to the food, if we can use such a mundane word.

Richard does not just cook chicken, or rump steak, or even just scrambled eggs – he makes an event and a culinary journey of each dish.

A main course of grilled salmon and steamed Asian vegetables sounds a bit like fish and veggies, but at the Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse, dining is a journey into spices and flavours – a unique culinary experience. The herbs and vegetables are grown in the beautiful, fairy-like gardens – fresh and quite brilliantly served.

Dinner comprises seven courses. It's so good that even the sorbet, included primarily to cleanse the palate, is a taste sensation. Ours was a memorable meal.

Breakfast is breakfast, right? Not in the world of Richard Poynton, no. If you are expecting a Wimpy-style fried egg, toast and a cheese griller – not that you would! – you'd be in for a surprise. Here you opt for a gourmet poached egg, with a tangy sauce that you will remember much longer than that last Wimpy meal.

So what to do when you've had your meals and oohed and aahed about your beautiful room? There is plenty to do in the area, as it turns out. You can go hiking in the mountains, on the Highmoor Nature Reserve, or explore the region on horseback. You can try some fly fishing, for the wily rainbow or brown trout.



One of Cleopatra's claims to fame is its interior decoration – it's stunning. Below, left to right: After years of picking up secrets in international restaurants, chef Richard Poynton produces a culinary extravaganza!



Above: There are only 11 rooms at the lodge, and each one is decorated in a different theme. Each has a name, such as the Cowboy Room, the Darjeeling Room, the Postcard Room, and so on. Exploring the intricacies of your "hotel room" has never been as much fun as it is here.

Further afield, you can wander through the Midlands Meander route with its 184 craft shops. You can go for a flip in a helicopter and experience the mountains from a bird's eye view. You can see historic Bushman paintings in the area, or book a spot on a Sani Pass tour (departs 9:15am and returns to nearby Himeville at 4pm).

Or you can just take in the peace and tranquility and luxury of Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse while you count down the minutes to the next meal.

### **Cleopatra? But this is KZN, not Egypt!**

The Cleopatra name comes from a rock formation high in the Drakensberg, overlooking the farmhouse. On a perfect day, at the right angle, and with a little bit of imagination, the rock formation looks like the profile drawings of Cleopatra – the last active pharaoh of Egypt. So meals here are served under the watchful eye of ancient royalty, no less! **LW**

More information: Tel. 033 267-7243;  
e-mail [cleopatramountain@telkomsa.net](mailto:cleopatramountain@telkomsa.net);  
[www.cleomountain.com](http://www.cleomountain.com).





ON PATROL  
With Eben Delpert

DUNE  
DRIVING

# Flying by the seat of your pants

Fancy aids and electronics aren't always a good thing. In fact, in an extreme off-road environment they can become a real irritation. For this reason, Eben prefers an old-school 4x4 such as the Nissan Patrol



**Back in the** old days, planes didn't boast fancy navigational equipment, which meant that pilots were forced to fly by the seat of their pants – using their experience and instincts.

Venturing into the Namib Desert in a 4x4 always reminds me of those early pilots. As with an old plane, a 4x4 driver suddenly needs to call on his experience and skill when traversing high dunes. Modern aids and electronics are no help. In fact, these gizmos can actually be a hindrance. Things such as traction control, hill descent control and ABS can trip you up in loose sand. Even diff locks can cause you to lose a tyre in the dunes if you don't know what you're doing.

In my experience, all these fancy modern aids don't serve much of a purpose in the desert. When it comes to serious off-road driving, only two things truly count: the skill of the driver and the fundamental 4x4 ability of the vehicle. The driver not only needs to know what he's doing but he also has to be very familiar with his vehicle. He must know its strengths and shortcomings.

Many years ago, I drove a VW Syncro, and had plenty of fun exploring the Namibian landscape in it. The vehicle was surprisingly capable. It performed very


well on gravel roads, and even traversed dry riverbeds without hassle. Its only real weakness was a lack of ground clearance, but a slight suspension lift and chunky all-terrain tyres fixed the problem.

This is something I've always struggled to understand: why do manufacturers hobble capable off-road vehicles with insufficient ground clearance and low-profile tyres? I've asked automotive engineers about this over the years (they often show up in Namibia to test their vehicles in the harsh environment) and they have always given me the same answer: the vast majority of owners will never tackle anything more extreme than a smooth gravel road, so setting up the vehicle for tar performance just makes more sense.

Of course, low-profile tyres are now more popular than ever, and I often have to go in search of odd-sized tyres in the middle of nowhere during my guided trips.

Thankfully, I have been driving a Nissan Patrol for the last few years. It is particularly well suited to the Namibian environment. Although it is plush and comfortable, it is also a basic "nuts and bolts" 4x4, with impressive off-road underpinnings.

The Patrol is considered a luxury SUV, but it is one of the few 4x4s that still boasts a solid front axle. Vehicles with independent suspension often "bottom out" off road because the wheels press upwards, leaving the undercarriage low and exposed. In contrast, a 4x4 with solid axles has the ability to maintain its ground clearance, pushing the chassis upwards as the axle lifts.

But it's not just the Patrol's suspension that makes it such a formidable off-road vehicle. It also boasts excellent ground clearance, a rear diff lock and a very robust chassis. It remains one of the best overlanders in the business. 

Eben and Marita  
Delpert with  
their Patrol.



# What enemies do snakes have?

We tend to think of snakes as dominant and dangerous, but they actually have a surprising number of natural enemies. Johan Marais discusses the animal kingdom's biggest snake killers



KNOW YOUR SNAKES  
With Johan Marais

SNAKE KILLERS

**Strangely enough, snakes** have a lot of enemies, and for many species it is a real struggle for survival. Eggs and hatchlings are obviously particularly vulnerable.

There are many predators that eat snake eggs, with the water monitor lizard and veld monitor being major culprits. With their forked tongues, these monitors are highly efficient at locating snake eggs, and will quickly eat an entire batch.

Honey badgers, baboons, monkeys and bush babies are also fond of snake eggs.

Juvenile snakes are particularly at risk and are often taken by mammal carnivores, a variety of birds, monitor lizards and other snakes. Survival rates are often low as predators take out large numbers of small snakes.

Domestic cats are also a major problem and very good at killing small snakes. Unfortunately, cats are inclined to bring half dead snakes into the house, as they do with mice, and people occasionally get bitten while trying to rescue the snakes.

Different species adopt different survival strategies, with most young snakes keeping a very low profile and eating often to get bigger, and so reduce the number of predators that threaten them. Black mambas, for instance, are in the region of 50cm long when they hatch and keep a low profile while eating as much as possible. They are known to reach a length of 2m within a year. It is uncommon to see a black mamba less than a metre long, and of the hundreds that I have encountered and captured, only three have been under a metre.

Adult snakes also face a variety of predators, particularly birds such as hawks and eagles, secretary birds, ground hornbills and many more. Several mammals eat

Right: Secretary birds are major snake predators. Hawks, eagles and hornbills also prey on snakes.



Top to bottom: A black file snake. A Western Natal green snake. A twig snake. Left: Honey badgers are notoriously tough. Unlike many other species that prey on juvenile snakes, a honey badger can take on a poisonous adult snake as well.

snakes, with honey badgers and mongooses being known as very efficient snake killers.

Honey badgers easily deal with adult snakes, but mongooses are not nearly as efficient at killing snakes as is often thought. In fact, most of the snakes that are taken by mongooses are juveniles.

It is unlikely that mongooses have any significant impact on snake numbers and, according to Prof Anne Rasa (author of *Mongoose Watch*) they are probably not major predators of snakes. It is certainly not true that there will not be snakes around if you are visited by mongooses. Actually, several snakes prey on mongooses, especially juveniles!

To my mind, the biggest threat to snakes is other snakes. There are several snakes that feed on other snakes. Most cobras, sand and grass snakes, file snakes and even the boomslang will eat other snakes if the opportunity arises.

In a puff adder study at Kwalata Reserve, Prof Graham Alexander of Wits University found that as many as half of the puff adders in the study were eaten by snouted cobras.

Twig snakes are also snake specialists and are particularly fond of green snakes of the genus *Philothamnus* – the Natal green snakes and green water snake. And it is not unusual for a snake to eat another snake longer than itself. The meal is just folded in a zig-zag shape as it is swallowed.

Snakes seem to be immune to their own venom and have a high resistance to the venom of other snakes. Snouted cobras often get bitten by puff adders but show few ill effects. The file snake is not venomous, yet it eats venomous snakes and does not bother to constrict them – it just swallows its prey half alive. **LW**

*Leisure Wheels* readers are welcome to contact me about snake awareness and venomous snake handling courses. For more information, email me at: [johan@africansnakebiteinstitute.com](mailto:johan@africansnakebiteinstitute.com)





SECOND-HAND TIPS  
With Warren Strong

SECOND-HAND  
DEFENDERS

# To TDI, or not to TDI

Okay, so you have decided that you need a Land Rover Defender in your life, but now you are faced with a thorny question: Should you opt for a TDI, a TD5 or a more modern Puma-powered Landy? Warren weighs the pros and cons

**Let's start by** looking at that old workhorse, the 300 TDI. This 2,5-litre four-cylinder oilburner is undoubtedly the most old-school of the bunch and boasts almost no electronics.

This means, of course, that it is probably the engine you want to opt for if you plan on driving all the way from Cape Town to Cairo. The TDI is not too fuel sensitive, meaning it will run on just about any dirty fuel you

manage to get your hands on.

Moreover, with its lack of electronics and mechanical fuel injection, it is the sort of engine that you can repair in the bush with nothing more than the most basic of tools. Thanks to its nature, problem solving is fairly easy. Study the engine and you will soon be able to work on it yourself.

The biggest benefit of the

TDI, however, is that it is practically impossible to kill. Yes, there will be niggles and hassles, but you will almost always be able to bring it back to life. Take care of the engine and it will last more than 350 000km.

But what are the shortcomings? Well, the TDI is a very agricultural engine. It is loud and basic, which means it isn't ideal if you'll be using your Landy as a daily driver. Also, accept the fact that your top speed on the open road will be around 100 km/h. Push the TDI beyond that for extended periods and you run the risk of shortening its life.

Now let's look at the 2,5-litre five-cylinder TD5. This, in my opinion, is the best all-round option.

If you plan using your Landy on a daily basis, but want it to be a proper overlander as well, the TD5 is probably the engine you want to go for.

The TD5 is more refined than the TDI, and boasts much better power delivery but, like the TDI, it can be repaired in the bush.

It isn't as basic as the TDI. Generally speaking, you will need more tools and more skills to work on the TD5 than the TDI, but it isn't a "workshop" engine. This is still a powerplant that you can work on yourself and get going in the middle of nowhere.

The TD5 can handle a heavy load, and can travel comfortably at around 110-115km/h, though you don't want to push it beyond that.

When it comes to the TD5, you really want to make sure that the previous owner looked after it well. Treat it cruelly and you'll be lucky if it lasts 200 000km. Take good care of the TD5, however, and it will last just as long as the TDI – beyond 350 000km.

As with the TDI, parts for the TD5 are easy to come by and not horribly expensive. In fact, parts for the TD5 are particularly affordable. Companies such as Engines Galore will sell you a reconditioned TD5 engine for around R27 500. In comparison, a new 300 TDI engine retails for R38 000 and a new Puma one for R40 000, so a TD5 engine is quite inexpensive.

Now we come to the (relatively) new Puma engine. This is a 2,4-litre four-cylinder mill that is a far cry from the old TDI. Capacity was reduced to 2,2 litres a while ago, but most of the second-hand Defenders still have the 2,4-litre version.

As a daily driver, a Defender

powered by a Puma engine is a pure joy. It is quiet, refined and powerful. Cruising at 120 km/h is not a problem for the Puma. It is also the lightest on fuel of the three engines.

But it has its limitations. In my opinion, the Puma engine is just too modern and complicated to power a true overlander.

It is also worth noting that there were some early teething problems with the Puma engines. The crank-angle sensors tended to give problems and the vacuum pump gaskets were too thin, sometimes causing engine oil to be blown out of the motor.

These problems were ironed out quickly, but if you are interested in a particular Puma engine, check exactly when it was produced.

I can't help feeling that, with the introduction of the Puma engine, the Defender lost some of its character. It simply isn't as old-school and basic as it once was. That said, there is no denying that the Puma powerplant has made the Landy much easier to live with on a daily basis. And some Landy fanatics absolutely swear by the Puma.

The engine you opt or will ultimately depend on what you want to use your Defender for. Want a hardcore overlander? Get a 300 TDI. Want an all-rounder that can work in the city and the bundu? Then it is the TD5 you want. Want a modern city-loving Landy? Then it's the Puma for you. **LW**



The 300TDI is a rugged and basic engine, perfect for hardcore overlanding. Below: The modern Puma engine is undoubtedly the most refined of the bunch. Insert: The TD5 remains very popular among Landy fans.



For more information on replacement 300 TDI, TD5 and Puma engines, visit [www.enginesgalore24-7.co.za](http://www.enginesgalore24-7.co.za). You can also phone 021 558-6610.



# Be a Boy Scout

Wondering how to prepare for that trip? It's easy, says Glyn Demmer. Just follow the Boy Scout motto, Be Prepared



TRAVEL TIPS  
With Glyn Demmer

## 4X4 TIPS

**In true Boy Scout** fashion one always needs to be prepared when travelling overland. The length of the trip as well as the destination will guide you on the level of preparation required.

I always keep a full set of spanners as well as screwdrivers, pliers and side cutters in two tool rolls under my rear seat for day-to-day hiccups around town. There you will also find a basic first-aid kit, gloves, duct-tape, cable ties and self-fusing silicone tape. I also carry a 3,5m tow strap and a torch.

One would obviously add more kit for a weekend away or a longer overland trip, and items such as recovery equipment would become essential if you are going off road.

Good planning is important and will ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. All too often, one reads on a forum about a breakdown that could have been avoided had proper precautions been taken.

Firstly, are you adequately covered in terms of insurance for your vehicle, and does it cover a trip to neighbouring states?

Also, do you have medical cover and insurance that will ensure repatriation of your vehicle? Consider a specialist policy such as the Ultimate Explorer from Cross Country.

Next, plan your route and check the availability of fuel. Create a budget for fuel, meals and accommodation. As many places still do not accept credit cards, you will have to take some cash with you. It's also worthwhile checking the location of ATMs.

Ensure that you book accommodation in advance. I once stayed at the Gariep Dam during low season and was amazed to see that the hotel was fully booked. I should have realised that this is an obvious stopover on the way from the northern provinces to the Cape.

If you are travelling across borders, or to remote areas, have your vehicle professionally checked by the servicing dealer. They know the vehicle and its history. They will do a full mechanical check, which should include an under-body inspection. You should also do a short off-road check yourself to

ensure that everything functions as it should. This includes the engagement and disengagement of 4WD (high and low range), functioning of the diff lock or traction control and suspension.

Remember to pack water, your recovery kit, a well-stocked first-aid kit, maps and your GPS unit.

Take certified copies of all travel documents and passports and keep original documents in a single waterproof pouch that is easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

The next step would be to add to the standard tools in your 4x4, ensuring that you have a jack, wheel spanner, handle and warning triangle. In the event of security nuts being fitted, take the necessary release socket as well. Add to that a socket set, hammer, chisel, tyre repair kit and tyre levers, and you are almost there.

Q Bond or Pratley Putty don't take up much space, but could save you a lot of trouble. Water repellent such as WD 40 is a must, and if you are travelling in wet areas where water crossings

may be necessary, throw in a wading sheet as well.

Basic spares are important if you are not going to be near a town or dealership.

Depending on your packing system, sort the items into clusters of similar stuff – kitchen, lighting, tools, etc. Ensure that everything is secure, especially stuff inside the vehicle, which could fly around if you are forced to brake suddenly!

What else should you do in preparation? Here is a list of things to check:

- Bull bar and auxiliary lights
- Winch
- Dual battery system
- Fridge
- Roof rack fitment
- Gas bottles
- Tow bar
- Recovery points
- Jerry cans and brackets
- Water cans or tanks

The list could go on, but just be as thorough as possible. A bit of forethought could save you a lot of hassle.

Once you're ready to go, relax and enjoy the trip. Oh, and don't forget to pack your spare key! **LW**



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FRANCOIS  
TALKS 4X4  
With Francois  
Rossouw

ANTIQUE  
TREASURES

# You never know what you'll find...

The best thing about overlanding, says Francois Rossouw, is the unpredictability of it all. You simply never know what you'll stumble across. Sometimes it is a terrific 4x4 trail. At other times, well, it is something inexplicable yet wonderful

**We recently did** a trip into the Drakensberg mountains between Bergville and Swinburn.

We went up the old and eroded Bezuidenhout's Pass that was popular before Van Reenen's Pass was built. It was quite a challenge. It took us one hour to complete a very tricky 1km stretch.

Next, we went down the old Retief's Pass with the permission, of course, of the owner of a farm that the pass traverses. It was also an experience, but the big surprise was still to come...

The next morning, we tackled the Middledale Pass between Geluksburg and Swinburn. About halfway up the pass, we turned left onto a private farm road and eventually came to a farmhouse and a huge scrap metal processing yard.

As it turned out, the farm

belonged to Schalk van Vuuren.

His mother, Corrie, used to be a teacher in Geluksburg, and she told us the stories and legends about the area. It was so interesting that, with Tannie Corrie's permission, we decided to take a route around the back of the Tintwa mountain. This was a route used only by the farmer to get to the remote areas where his cattle grazed at certain times of the year, and had not been used for at least six months.

At certain spots we had to chop up trees that were lying across the track. We also had to rebuild the road in some places where it had been washed away by recent storms. The going was slow but we enjoyed the trip immensely.

The track could hardly be called a trail. It was more like an ongoing obstacle course! It was narrow,

and you had to manoeuvre between the rocks as you climbed up very steep inclines. It was a 4x4 enthusiast's dream.

After a while, we got to the original farmyard where the first house had been built when Bezuidenhout's Pass was still in use and access was closer to the main road. Tannie Corrie's husband had been a dealer in scrap iron, and hoarded everything that he considered of historical value.

When the original farmhouse started to fall apart, the foreman reinforced it and decorated the house with all the antique items that had been collected over the years.

The stairs were constructed out of about 36 old ox-wagon axles, and the railings were made from old wagon wheels. The inside was decorated with old coffee grinders and meat mincers. Horseshoes and predator traps clung to the walls, while anvils and old water pumps dotted the yard.

Not too far from the house were two sheds full of antiques and plenty of old ploughs and farming equipment. The walls here had been crafted out of old milk cans, and the path from the sheds to the house was lined with old cars. Tons and tons of once valuable antiques littered the

yard. An antique dealer would be reduced to tears at the sight of all these old treasures abandoned to the elements.

As you might imagine, I battled to get the group members away from the fascinating scene.

But just when I thought we would never hit the road again, a rare animal came to my aid. A Wahutsi bull from north Africa called the property home, and he had clearly become frustrated by all the trespassers. The Wahutsi is a rare type of cattle known for its extremely large horns. The importance of a north African tribal chief is measured by the size of his biggest bull's horns.

This particular bull started to blow through his nose and dig into the dirt with his front hooves, ready to chase us away. The group members ran for the shelter of the vehicles. Afraid that he would charge one of the 4x4s, we drove off as quickly as possible.

Back at the lodge at Geluksburg that evening, we couldn't stop talking about the amazing old house we had encountered. You truly never know what you will encounter on a 4x4 trip! **LW**



We manoeuvred our way through the rocks on the Protea Route to get to an old farmhouse built out of scrap metal and antiques.



Above, left: Collectables from previous centuries dotted the farmyard. Above, centre: This Wahutsi bull lives on the old farm. Above, right: Tons of old metal were found on the farm.



# A look at aftermarket components

There is usually a greater risk in buying aftermarket products from an outside supplier than the part that was fitted as original equipment.



## This is because

manufacturers spend a lot of time and money in conducting endurance testing on all components and accessories fitted to their cars.

Most accessory parts suppliers cannot afford to do the same amount of testing as the original equipment manufacturers, with the result that their products are often inferior. This applies equally to small accessories as it does to large ones, such as an air conditioner system.

It's especially important not to put too much store on sales talk, because the salesman has only one thing in mind – to sell you something.

## Fuel-saving devices

A modern car is the product of a great deal of research, some very sophisticated design procedures, high quality production techniques, thousands of hours of full-throttle dynamometer runs and millions of kilometres of road testing under extreme road and weather conditions. As a result, the manufacturer knows what is best for its vehicles, and publishes this information in a workshop manual and an owner's manual.

However, as soon as a new model appears, aftermarket additives and gadgets flood the internet, promising unbelievable improvements in fuel consumption, performance and engine life. Not surprisingly, most of these products are not worth buying.

They fall into various categories:

1. They don't work and may harm the engine or some other component.
2. They don't work but are harmless.
3. They appear to work, and then fail after some months.
4. They work, but will reduce engine or component life in the long run.
5. They work, but do not live up to the advertiser's claims.
6. They perform as advertised.

The last category is the only one worth looking at, but very few products fall into this segment. There is usually some reason or other why the seller's claims can be ignored.

## Spotting bogus products

Here are some ways of spotting bogus products:

1. The suppliers usually claim improvements of more than 10%. Engineers know that any improvement of more than a few percentage points is just about impossible.
2. They offer pseudo-scientific explanations on how and why the product works. The terms used would often baffle a scientist, let alone a member of the public. I'm often given this kind of explanation and it makes my day, because it's great fun to tie the

salesman up in knots by asking him to explain his fancy words.

3. The suppliers claim to solve problems that don't exist, or conditions that are better fixed by going to the root cause.
4. Ask the salesman why such a fantastic product is not standard equipment on a new vehicle. He will usually tell you that one or more of the major automotive manufacturers are evaluating it. Your answer should be that you'll buy the product as soon as a major manufacturer is also using it.

## Wrong advice

Wrong advice by mechanics and "expert" members of motoring clubs is another source of confusion. For example, it is common for mechanics and workshop foremen to tell motorists that the owner's handbook recommendation to change engine oil every 15 000km is wrong. They will then claim that the oil should be changed more often, at say 10 000km or even 8000km. The truth is that there are at least three good reasons why this advice is wrong:

1. Modern oils are far better at lubricating and conducting heat away than oils of 15 years ago.
2. The oil stays cleaner because the adoption of fuel injection has resulted in an engine running much closer to a chemically-correct

mixture for most of the time.

3. The change to unleaded fuel also keeps the oil cleaner for longer.

## Anecdotal evidence

A great deal of car talk is based on anecdotal evidence, meaning it has not been scientifically proved. The advice that you should add some two-stroke oil to diesel fuel is an example of anecdotal advice. Some people add this to aid the fuel's lubricity, but there is already a lubricity additive in the fuel. It was put there by the oil company so, by adding more, you're trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. In addition, some two-stroke oils may contain a chemical that will contaminate the catalytic converter.

Modern oils are so scientifically blended that aftermarket oil additives belong in the category of products that are trying to solve a non-existent problem.

My advice is: stick to whatever the owner's manual recommends. **LW**

**Modern oils are so scientifically blended that aftermarket oil additives belong in the category of products that are trying to solve a non-existent problem.**







VOETSPORE DIARY  
With Johan  
Badenhorst

INTO AFRICA

# An African knife, made in Norway

The Helle is a Norwegian knife. The factory was started in 1932 by brothers Steinar and Sigmund Helle. They produced the first knives in a forge on their farm, and soon their knives became world famous. But there was one gap in their collection – a proper African knife

**About a year** ago Anders Haglund, a representative of Helle knives in Norway, was introduced to me by Corrie Moolman, the South African agent. Anders was thinking about introducing a Helle knife developed by the *Voetspore* team for African conditions. We were keen to co-operate.

I asked Anders to come up with a few ideas. Instead, he suggested that we develop the design during our next journey, and so we set off with a few prototypes on our most recent expedition, *Voetspore in the Great Rift Valley*.

Six weeks into our journey, when we were in Kenya, Anders and Corrie joined us for a few days. Anders was not only keen to develop the knife but also wanted to taste a bit of Africa. And he got quite a mouthful!

Anders and Corrie, accompanied by Corrie's father-in-law, travelled to Nairobi from Pretoria by road in three days. This meant non-stop driving for hours on end, and they eventually met up with us at Jungle Junction in Nairobi, just as we were about to leave for Ethiopia. Our route north was the road from Archers

Post to Marsabit and Moyale. This is one of the most difficult stretches of road on the African continent, through the Chalbi and Didi Galgalu Desert.

We reached the desert by late on a Sunday afternoon and

set up camp, not far from the road. Setting up camp in the wilderness is something we are used to. Hearing the laughter of hyenas and the howling of jackal makes us feel at home, but for Anders this was an exceptional



Overlanding in Africa demands a tough and versatile knife.

Left: The Didi Galgalu is an African knife made in Norway. *The Voetspore* team were asked what they needed in an "African" knife, and their views contributed to the design of the Didi Galgalu.







Left: Anders Haglund of Helle joined Johan Badenhorst and his team for part of their recent journey.

Below, left: Helle is a Norwegian knife company founded in 1932. It makes some of the best knives in the world.

Below: Rare torrential rains flooded the Didi Galgalu Desert in Kenya during the most recent Voetspore expedition.



experience – a true African safari. He was also keen to look at the handmade axes and knives that the locals produced and used. These tools are even more rudimentary than those that the Helle brothers had made on their farm more than 80 years ago.

Anders had brought us a prototype of his proposed knife, and we had a discussion about the handle, steel and size of the blade. One thing was for certain: we needed a working knife.

The guys prepared an excellent meal, as usual. It seemed as though Anders, Corrie and Wynand enjoyed it, even though they were fully aware of the sounds of the African bush around us.

We went to bed, the Voetspore guys on their stretchers under the awnings of the Amaroks and our guests in their pop-up and dome tents.

Next morning we had breakfast and another brief discussion on the design of the knife. Then we continued on our journey north.

The desert in this part

of Kenya is known as a challenging region to travel through at the best of times, but it is even worse when it is flooded by rare torrential rain. As luck would have it, this is what happened when Anders and Co joined us.

Just before Marsabit we were stopped in our tracks by a number of bogged down vehicles. The rain of the previous night had made travelling extremely difficult. But we had no choice – we had to get round the obstacles in our three Amaroks. Our guests, on the other hand, had to turn around. They had to get back to Nairobi and then to SA. We continued to Ethiopia and Djibouti, but not before a brief discussion about the name of the first African knife

in the Helle collection.

It was decided to call it the Didi Galgalu – the name of the desert where it got its final design.

Back in Norway the Helle knife makers had to refine our design. It had to be a sturdy knife with a big handle, suitable for a South African man's hand. And it had to be made of African wood. The decision was made to use teak from Zambia. The knife was fitted with three studs, two sunken ones and the third with a hole for a lanyard to be attached.

We finished our journey at Lac Assal in Djibouti and returned to SA.

In April 2015, the fifth Huntex Expo was held at Gallagher Estate, Midrand. It was time again for Anders Haglund, accompanied by Torodd Helle, son of Sigmund and current owner of Helle Fabriker, to return to SA. It was at Huntex 2015 that the Didi Galgalu was introduced to the world.

Now Helle of Norway has a truly African knife to offer, developed on the continent by local guys! 



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CAMPSITE REVIEW  
with  
Gary Swemmer

RIVERWILD

# A walk on the wild side

Gary Swemmer from the 4WD Truckin' Company has agreed to provide a series of campsite reviews for *Leisure Wheels*. Depending on how you look at it, his first attempt could be viewed as both a success and a failure!

**While recently looking** for a place to stay in Mpumalanga (close to the Kruger Park), we chanced upon the RiverWild campsite. A few locals recommended it as a top-notch resort, and we had read good reports online.

Our first clue that RiverWild wasn't all that we were expecting came when we stopped briefly at Sudwala Caves to ask for directions to the campsite. The moment we mentioned the name, the young receptionist gave an involuntary snort, giggled with her co-worker, and then politely directed us a few clicks down the road.

The second clue was the dilapidated sign that marked the entrance. That sign, as it turned out, was symbolic of RiverWild's general state of disrepair. But the unsettling

bit – the really heart-wrenching part – was the decaying remnants of what RiverWild once was: one of SA's most spectacular holiday resorts.

The campsite itself consists of several large clearings, all of which are level and matted in golf-green grass. The area surrounding the trailer-friendly campsites consists of dense woodlands, a broad healthy river, and a series of challenging off-road tracks.

The facilities at RiverWild are comprehensive, offering things like hot-water showers (donkey-powered), rock pools, a communal braai area, wooden walkways, a conference room, and even a jungle gym for the kids. But – and here's the catch – just about all of these items have either fallen apart or are in the process of rotting away. The jungle gym, for example, would be a

Health & Safety official's worst nightmare.

However, if you look past the faded paint, decaying wood and rusted old braai drums, and try to think of RiverWild as a "well-equipped" bush camp, it may not matter that the lodge's wooden structures are not what they used to be. The important thing to remember is that the glass is half-full in RiverWild's case, and that the area is incredibly scenic, severely overgrown, and uniquely challenging to any rough 'n tough off-roader who doesn't mind getting his vehicle a little... tarnished.

So, to sum up: if you're keen on some tree-ploughing, mud-slinging, rock-crawling action (followed by a comfortable night's rest on a lush green lawn), then RiverWild may be the place for you. For everyone else, steer clear of this one!



## Ablutions

**Condition:** Relatively clean but showing signs of age

**Toilets:** Flush toilets

**Showers:** Yes

**Hot water:** Donkey powered

## Facilities

**Space for trailers and caravans:** Yes

**Conference facilities:** Yes

**Braai:** There are a few

drums scattered about, but rather

bring your own portable braai

**Jungle gym:** Yes, but in desperate

need of maintenance

**Swimming pool:** Yes, river-fed rock pools – and one for small children, too

**Cellphone signal:** Limited

## 4X4 trails

There are several routes at RiverWild, all of which are self-drive trails and cost a fixed fee of R300 per vehicle. But, be warned: some of the tracks are extremely overgrown!

## Safety & security

There was limited activity during our stay, both in the way of lodge employees (one or two people) and other guests (none). Receptionists were there to greet us but, once night fell, it was hard to know where they went to, or if there was any security protecting the lodge. As a result, the campsite felt a bit isolated and vulnerable. However, it must be said that none of our camping goods were tampered with when

we left them unattended, and the staff at RiverWild were friendly, polite, and keen on the business.

It should also be noted that this part of Mpumalanga is a moderate-risk malaria area, so precautions should be taken: bring insect repellent and prophylactics.


## Price

Prices range from R100 pppn camping, to R1800 per night in a 4-sleeper chalet.

## Contact

Call 081 438 5511, or email [info@riverwild.biz](mailto:info@riverwild.biz) or go to [www.riverwild.biz](http://www.riverwild.biz) for more information.

## Directions

From Nelspruit, take the N4 towards Gauteng. After 25km, turn right at the Sudwala Caves/Sabie turn off. Go past the Sudwala Caves onto the Weltevreden dirt road for about 7km, and then turn right at the RiverWild/River's Edge signs. Follow the signs to the resort. 







Apie and Yolande during his racing days. Apie and Robin after another win.

# Champion racer and family man

As readers undoubtedly know by now, racing legend Apie Reyneke tragically passed away in a helicopter crash on 29 May. It is a terrible loss that will be felt by many. Jannie Herbst, a close personal friend, and Robin Houghton, Apie's decade-long racing partner, recall great times spent with a great man

**I met Apie Reyneke** at a time when his father, Hennie, became SA's off-road racing champion in 1983. He was a young man of 26 and together with his older brother, Christo, he keenly assisted dad during races.

Sadly, Hennie passed away the following year when his car collided with a horse near their farmhouse one night. The loss of his father left Apie devastated, but he and Christo decided to continue the Reyneke off-road tradition and, just like their father, they competed in Nissan Safari bakkies. Many victories for both of them followed, but when Apie won the gruelling Desert Race in 1987 (four years after his father's victory in the same event) it was the beginning of a legendary racing career (see Robin's tribute).

Over the years Apie and I became personal friends and often my family and I enjoyed his and Thelma's (his first wife) hospitality at their impressive cattle and game farm 110km outside Vryburg. We would sit on the back of one of Apie's farm cruisers while his eight-year-old son, Apie-Rahl, was behind the steering wheel taking us on a game drive. My two boys couldn't believe it!

Whenever Apie and Thelma visited us in Randburg they brought along a heap of the best rump steaks you can imagine. Fun and *kuiering* were always non-stop when our families were together. Apie and Thelma had fantastic stories to tell. They loved the outdoors and camping, and on one such occasion Thelma was nearly taken by a leopard.

Thelma also did some navigating for Apie and in 1995 they won the Barberspan 500. But two years later the family was once again plunged

**I met Apie Reyneke** in 1994. I was still fairly new to the racing scene, but Apie was already a champion and a legend. He was an intimidating presence: garrulous, barrel-chested and larger than life.

We had been thrown together. Apie was in need of a navigator, and I was in need of a driver. Fate put us in the same car. And I quickly learned just how fortunate I had been to end up in the same car as Apie. Things were different in those days. Being competent behind the steering wheel wasn't enough. Drivers had to work on their own cars, and Apie had impressive skill and knowledge when it came to the technical side of things.

Apie Reyneke was a consummate professional. He took the job of racing very seriously, and together we managed to win five consecutive South African off-road titles for production vehicles, from 1994 to 1999. He loved racing, and the Desert Race in Botswana was always his favourite. He always took particular pleasure in winning the Desert Race.

But to me, and, indeed, to many other people, Apie Reyneke was more than a racing legend: He was a warm-hearted family man, a loyal friend and a successful farmer who managed to make a success of farming in a very difficult environment.

He will be missed, but not forgotten. The impact he had on countless lives, and the indelible mark he left on the South African racing scene, will always be remembered.

— Robin Houghton

into sadness when Thelma died following an accident when the Land Cruiser in which she was transporting building material rolled not far from the farmhouse. She was 36.

The three children were all still in school and to everyone it was clear that Apie went through a very tough time. But as they say, life must go on and it wasn't long before Apie and Robin were back to their winning ways.

Our two families went on a camping safari to Botswana about a year after the tragedy and to us urbanites it was a revelation to be in the presence of the three junior Reynekes. They knew how to do everything – pitching the tents, creating a kitchen, making a fire, pouring our favourite drinks and even preparing and serving dinner.

Carien-Mari, who was in matric, took charge of the kitchen. During our stay there, Apie-Rahl and his older brother, Hendrik, also did a perfect job of flaying the springboks that were hunted, and cutting and packing the meat. It was clear that these kids enjoyed a swell upbringing.

In 1999, Apie met Yolande Steyn and they soon got married. Their son, Abraham, was born in 2002; and Apie adopted Yolande's four-year-old son, Adolph.

Apie continued to have success in racing but packed it in at the end of 2003 to concentrate on developing Serapa Safaris. Together with Yolande, he built this hunting venture into a highly successful enterprise while continuing with his other farming activities.

After their various studying courses, all three children got married and continued with life as farmers. Unbelievably, another tragedy befell the Reynekes when Apie-Rahl's wife of less than two years, Dencilia (26), died when her car overturned on a dirt road close to the Reyneke farm in April last year.

Apie, we came to know you as a devoted husband and father, a successful farmer and businessman, a fantastic off-road racer and on top of that you were one helluva nice oke! You will be sadly missed by all who shared life with you.

We express our heartfelt condolences to Yolande, the two sons and the entire Reyneke family on their loss.

• Apie (58), Yolande (42) and Abraham (14) were in Apie's Robinson helicopter on their way to Pretoria on 29 May when it developed engine trouble. Apie tried his best to land but the chopper struck a tree and they crashed. Apie died on the scene and although Yolande suffered serious injuries it is expected that she will recover fully. Abraham received minor injuries and was out of hospital after one day. The accident happened in the Delareyville area in North West Province. **WV**

— Jannie Herbst



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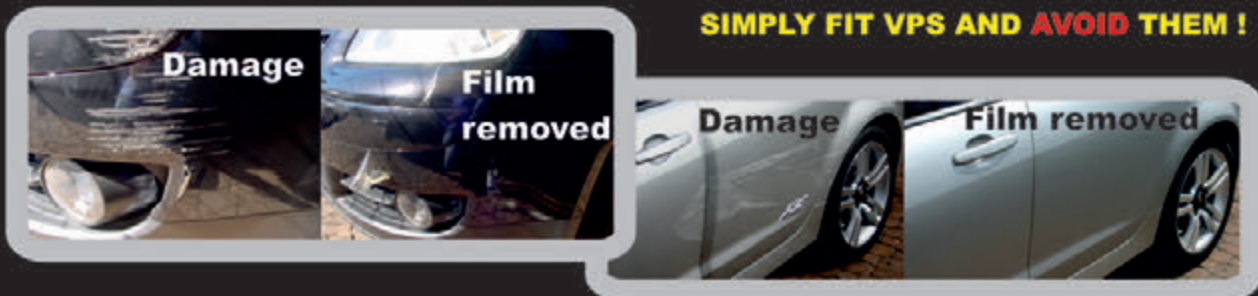
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Q3	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.4T S	402 500	4/1.4T	110/5000	250/1500	5.5
1.4T S auto	419 500	4/1.4T	110/5000	250/1500	5.8
2.0T quattro auto	499 000	4/2.0T	132/4000	320/1400	6.5
2.0TDI quattro auto	515 000	4/2.0TD	135/4200	380/1750	5.3
2.0T 155kW quattro	544 500	4/2.0T	155/5000	300/1800	7.7
RS Q3 quattro	752 000	5/2.5T	228/5200	420/1500	8.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 64 litres.. **Average sales per month:**

176 >> The Q3 is trendy, modern and – in typical Audi fashion – very well put together. The ride is sporty yet wonderfully comfortable and luxurious. It's not an off-roader, but it can deal with gravel tracks. We reckon that, as an overall package, this "Q" may be the best of the lot. Pricing is reasonably competitive, but the optional extra list will certainly add a lot more rands to the deal. **LW choice:** 2.0TDI quattro. **Also look at:** BMW X1, MINI Countryman, Mercedes-Benz GLA, Subaru XV



A4 ALLROAD	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0T	525 000	4/2.0T	165/4300	350/1500	7.0
2.0TDI	530 500	4/2.0TD	130/4200	380/1750	6.0

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years/100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 61 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a >> More station wagon than SUV, the Allroad is a great option for those looking for something low-slung and nimble, but still (reasonably) rugged and spacious. The A4 isn't going to tackle any serious trails, but it can handle a dirt road, and it looks pretty funky with its black cladding. This is not a 4x4 in the traditional sense, but it is a great family vehicle. Perfect for those weekend visits to the farm! **LW choice:** 2.0 TDI. **Also look at:** Subaru Outback, Volvo V60 Cross Country / XC70



Q5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0T S quattro	559 000	4/2.0T	132/4000	320/1500	7.5
2.0TDI S quattro	565 000	4/2.0TD	130/4200	380/1750	5.9
2.0TDI S quattro auto	582 000	4/2.0TD	130/4200	380/1750	6.0
2.0T SE quattro	636 000	4/2.0T	165/4500	350/1500	7.9
3.0T SE quattro	722 500	V6/3.0S	200/4750	400/2500	8.5
3.0TDI SE quattro	742 000	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	580/1750	6.4
SQ5 TDI quattro	867 000	V6/3.0TD	230/3900	650/1450	6.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years/100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 75 litres.. **Average sales per month:**

115 >> Designed to fill the gap between the massive Q7 and the Q3, the Q5 is a dazzling piece of niche engineering. A highly aspirational vehicle, with the (very) few weak points far outweighed by the great ones. The turbocharged petrol engines are outstanding. **LW choice:** 2.0T quattro. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, BMW X3, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Porsche Macan, Lexus NX, Volvo XC60



Q7	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0TDI quattro	855 500	V6/3.0TD	180/3800	550/1750	7.4
3.0T quattro	900 000	V6/3.0S	245/5500	440/2900	10.7
4.2TDI quattro	1 055 000	V8/4.1TD	250/4000	760/1750	9.9

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years/100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 100 litres. **Average sales per month:**

18 >> Big and imposing, the Q7 makes no excuses for what it is: a super-luxurious, top-end SUV, with a price to match the image. This is a luxury barge that you won't often find in the bundu, but it can go surprisingly far off the beaten path, especially when it comes to sand. **LW choice:** 4.2TDI. **Also look at:** BMW X5, Infiniti QX80, Mercedes-Benz GL, Porsche Cayenne, VW Touareg, Range Rover Sport / Range Rover, Volvo XC90



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X1	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
sDrive18i	402 656	4/2.0	110/6400	200/3600	7.7
sDrive18i auto	419 769	4/2.0	110/6400	200/3600	7.9
sDrive20i	427 309	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.9
sDrive20i auto	444 796	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.7
sDrive20d	441 923	4/2.0TD	135/4000	380/1750	4.9

sDrive20d auto	460 539	4/2.0TD	135/4000	380/1750	5.0
xDrive20i	482 746	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	7.5
xDrive20i auto	499 822	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	7.1
xDrive20d	497 565	4/2.0TD	135/4000	380/1750	5.5
xDrive20d auto	515 360	4/2.0TD	135/4000	380/1750	5.4
xDrive28i	554 925	4/2.0T	180/5000	350/1250	7.2

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 63 litres. **Average sales per month:**

30 >> The X1 still epitomises the funky next-generation crossovers, and armed with a range of state-of-the-art engines, the (modern) go is there to match the show. This is mainly the market it is aimed at the adventurous at heart who wants to head out onto dirt roads without fear of getting stuck or breaking down, with a mountain bike attached to the BMW's rear door. **LW choice:** xDrive20d. **Also look at:** MINI Countryman, Audi Q3, Mercedes GLA, Volvo V40 CC



X3	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive20i	548 938	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	7.4
xDrive20i auto	565 707	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.9
xDrive20d	578 629	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	5.0
xDrive28i	648 809	4/2.0T	180/5000	400/1750	7.0
xDrive30d	733 975	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/2000	5.7
xDrive35i	758 990	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 67 litres.. **Average sales per month:**

145 >> The X3 is (reasonably) big, fast, smart and all-round way better than the original X3. Especially driver-type drivers will love the way the X3 handles, and feels. And with up to 225 kW of power, it's fast enough too! It still doesn't like 4x4 driving. On gravel roads, in mud and sand, the powerful new X3 is quite capable, though. Run-flat tyres and off-road terrain however, don't like each other at all. **LW choice:** xDrive20i. **Also look at:** Audi Q5, Infiniti QX50, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Lexus NX, Porsche Macan, Volvo XC60



X4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive20i	661 707	4/2.0T	135/5000	270/1250	6.9
xDrive20d	664 629	4/2.0TD	140/4000	400/1750	5.0
xDrive28i	725 809	4/2.0T	180/5000	350/1250	7.0
xDrive30d	811 475	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/1500	5.7
xDrive35i	820 990	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 74 litres.. **Average sales per month:**

88 >> BMW's rather unusual X6 SUV/coupe has received a smaller sibling in the form of the X4. Like the X3 is a more compact version of the X5, the X4 takes the design of the X6, and places it into a more compact package. It has AWD, but isn't really designed for off-road driving. The X4 is made for tar roads, combining the feel of a coupe with the ride height of an SUV. **LW choice:** xDrive30d. **Also look at:** Range Rover Evoque, Porsche Macan, Lexus NX



X5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive35i	877 400	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.5
xDrive30d	890 194	6/3.0TD	190/4000	560/1500	5.9
xDrive40d	1 005 296	6/3.0TD	230/4400	630/1500	6.0
xDrive50i	1 113 670	V8/4.4T	330/5500	650/2000	9.6
M50d	1 168 938	6/3.0TD	280/4000	740/2000	6.6
X5 M	1 657 159	V8/4.4T	423/6000	750/2200	11.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:**

171 >> BMW has not strayed too far from its winning SUV formula. The X5 remains an elegant and sporty SUV, and continues to lead the segment. **LW choice:** xDrive30d. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, Mercedes-Benz ML, Infiniti QX70, Porsche Cayenne, Range Rover Sport, Volvo XC90



X6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
xDrive35i	955 503	6/3.0T	225/5800	400/1200	8.5
xDrive40d	1 056 912	6/3.0TD	230/4400	630/1500	6.2
xDrive50i	1 173 773	V8/4.4T	330/5500	650/2000	9.7
M50d	1 332 540	6/3.0TD	280/4000	740/2000	6.6
X6 M	1 690 659	V8/4.4T	423/6000	750/2200	11.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 85 litres. **Average sales per month:** 68 **Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km >> As the even sportier sibling



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of the X5, the X6 attempts to marry the sleek, sporty design of a coupe with the large frame of an SUV. Is it successful? We'll leave it up to you to decide, but the vehicle undoubtedly has a lot of presence on the road. **LW Choice:** M50d, if you can afford it. **Also look at:** Porsche Cayenne, Range Rover Sport



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CAPTIVA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 LT	366 500	4/2.4	123/5600	230/4600	8.8
2.4 LT auto	384 000	4/2.4	123/5600	230/4600	8.8
2.2D LT	398 600	4/2.2TD	135/3800	400/2000	7.9

**Service plan:** 3 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 143

» The Captiva has been a very good seller in its class. It's a good, honest package, offering quite a bit of car for the money. It even has seven seats, and an adult can actually sit in the last row without any ill-effects. The interior is loaded with standard kit – making the package all the more attractive. Sure, it has an electronic 4x4 system, but it doesn't like tackling dongas. **LW choice:** 2.4 LT. **Also look at:** Hyundai ix35, Kia Sportage, Nissan X-Trail, Subaru Forester



TRAILBLAZER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5D LT	434 900	4/2.5TD	120/3600	380/2000	7.4
2.8D LTZ auto	513 500	4/2.8TD	144/3600	500/2000	9.5
2.8D 4x4 LTZ	551 100	4/2.8TD	144/3600	440/2000	8.0
2.8D 4x4 LTZ auto	569 800	4/2.8TD	144/3600	500/2000	9.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:**

76 litres **Average sales per month:** 85 »

The Trailblazer is probably the closest thing to a real rival the Toyota Fortuner has ever encountered. Based on the underpinnings of the sixth-generation Isuzu KB, and boasting a raft of new tech, safety, awesome packaging and powerful and modern new engines, the Blazer has – on paper – all that it takes to trump the Fortuner. Except a Toyota badge, that is. The 4x4 Trailblazer models have a part-time transfer case with 2H, 4H and 4LOW settings. Ample ground clearance combined with a range of electronic driving aids, and overall the Trailblazer is a pretty mean off-roader. However, the lack of a rear differential lock could be its undoing. **LW choice:** 2.8 LTZ 4x4 auto. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport, Nissan Pathfinder, Land Rover Discovery Sport



**CITROËN** Toll free: 0860 211 112 Website: [www.citroen.co.za](http://www.citroen.co.za)

C4 CACTUS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.2 Feel	224 900	3/1.2	60/5750	118/2750	4.6
1.2 e-THP Feel	259 900	3/1.2T	81/5500	205/1500	4.7
1.2 e-THP Shine	284 900	3/1.2T	81/5500	205/1500	4.7

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 50 litres. **Average sales per month:**

New » Citroën has introduced one of the funkiest little crossovers to arrive on the scene in quite some time. Sure, it doesn't have AWD and it doesn't boast tons of luggage space, but it does have trendy styling and a great engine. It also has enough ground clearance to ensure that you can travel on ugly gravel roads without hassle. Most importantly, the Cactus sports a very attractive price tag. Considering all it offers, the crossover offers great value for money. **LW Choice:** 1.2 Turbocharged Shine. **Also look at:** Renault Captur, Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 2008, Opel Mokka.



C4 AIRCROSS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0i Attraction	313 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.5
2.0i Comfort	337 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.5
2.0i Seduction	345 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.5
2.0i Seduction auto	360 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	7.6
HdI 115 Seduction	376 900	4/1.6TD	84/3600	270/1750	4.6
HdI 115 4WD Comfort	387 900	4/1.6TD	84/3600	270/1750	4.9
2.0i 4WD Exclusive	410 900	4/2.0	113/6000	198/4200	8.1

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 63 litres. **Average sales per month:**

15 » It's cool, it's hip and it's rather pretty too. This is French manufacturer Citroën's new C4 Aircross – a suave compact SUV with French flair written all over it. Sure, it's not a real 4x4. But it's the Louis Vuitton of the soft-roader market. You'd never guess it, but this C4 Aircross is actually based on the Mitsubishi ASX and Outlander platform. Serious! The Citroën's intelligent 4WD system senses wheel slip and adjusts the power between the front and rear axles accordingly. The centre diff can be locked to provide a 50/50 split between the two axles. **LW choice:** HdI 115 Seduction. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Subaru XV, Hyundai ix35, Nissan Qashqai



**FORD** Toll free 0860 011 022 Website [www.ford.co.za](http://www.ford.co.za)

ECOSPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5 Ambiente	210 900	4/1.5	82/6300	138/4400	6.5
1.5 Titanium auto	270 900	4/1.5	82/6300	138/4400	6.5
1.0T Trend	246 900	3/1.0T	92/6000	170/1400	5.7
1.0T Titanium	266 900	3/1.0T	92/6000	170/1400	5.7
1.5TDCi Trend	250 900	4/1.5TD	66/3750	205/2000	4.5
1.5TDCi Titanium	270 900	4/1.5TD	66/3750	205/2000	4.5

**Service Plan:** 4 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 52 litres. **Average sales per month:**

1 036 » Don't underestimate this little soft-roader – with 200mm ground clearance it's ready for that middlemanetjie. No AWD version is planned for SA as yet, though, as it makes up less than 10% of the Brazilian market, where the EcoSport made its debut. It's surprisingly spacious, light on fuel and easy to drive. **LW Choice:** 1.0T Titanium. **Also look at:** Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Renault Duster, Peugeot 2008



RANGER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SuperCab					
2.5 Hi-Rider XL	272 900	4/2.5	122/5500	226/4500	10.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XL	314 900	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
3.2 Hi-Rider XLS	386 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.3
3.2 4x4 XLS	435 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.8
3.2 4x4 XLS auto	449 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.7
Double Cab					
2.5 Hi-Rider XL	303 900	4/2.5	122/5500	226/4500	10.9
2.2 Hi-Rider XL	326 900	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
2.2 Hi-Rider XLS	407 900	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
2.2 4x4 XL-Plus	397 900	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	8.2
2.2 4x4 XLS	461 900	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	8.3
3.2 Hi-Rider XLT	461 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.3
3.2 Hi-Rider XLT auto	474 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.1
3.2 4x4 XLT	519 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.8
3.2 4x4 XLT auto	530 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.7
3.2 Hi-Rider Wildtrak	484 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.3
3.2 Hi-Rider Wildtrak auto	494 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.1
3.2 4x4 Wildtrak	551 900	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1500	9.7

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 2 179 (March) » The Ranger is really good-looking, powerful, offers good

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value for money, has loads of interior space and comfort, rides like a car, and even comes with a five-star Euro NCAP safety rating! So it's just about a full house from Ford. Rugged underpinnings are now complimented by modern technology such as traction control, hill start assist and so on, but only in the top versions. All the 4x4 derivatives get low range and a rear diff lock. **LW choice:** 2.2TDCi XLS 4x4. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, VW Amarok, Isuzu KB



KUGA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5T Ambiente	321 900	4/1.5T	110/5700	240/1600	6.6
1.5T Trend	357 900	4/1.5T	110/5700	240/1600	6.6
1.5T Trend auto	371 900	4/1.5T	132/5700	240/1600	7.0
1.5T AWD Trend	398 900	4/1.5T	132/5700	240/1600	7.7
2.0T AWD Titanium	439 900	4/2.0T	177/5700	340/2000	8.8
2.0TDCi AWD Trend	424 900	4/2.0TD	132/3750	400/2000	6.2
2.0TDCi AWD Titanium	459 900	4/2.0TD	132/3750	400/2000	6.2

**Service plan:** 4 years / 80 000 km for 1.5T and 2.0T; 5 years / 90 000 km for 2.0TDCi

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:**

370 » The Kuga has been making waves with its long features list, EcoBoost engine and technological additions, like a hands-free tailgate mechanism, Curve Control and lane-keep assist. Like most crossovers in its segment, it's not too fond of the rough stuff. That being said, it does have AWD and 198mm of ground clearance, so it can tackle bad gravel roads without hassle. **LW choice:** 1.5 EcoBoost Trend. **Also look at:** Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V, VW Tiguan



**FOTON** Toll free 0861 644 446 Website [www.fotonsa.co.za](http://www.fotonsa.co.za)

TUNLAND	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.8 off-road Comfort	294 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 off-road Luxury	314 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 4x4 Comfort	369 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3
2.8 4x4 Luxury	389 950	4/2.8TD	120/3600	360/1800	8.3

**Service plan:** 2 years / 40 000 km for 4x2; 5 years / 70 000 km for 4x4 **Fuel tank:** 80 litres **Average sales per month:** n/a » This is probably the best bakkie so far from China. Which doesn't mean it's perfect, of course. It is clearly modelled in size and style according to the Hilux, but overall it really opens up a new playing field for the Chinese. The Cummins engine is another plus point, as is the list of other international partners. However, pricing is not as competitive as one would expect from a Chinese brand, with the extra attention to quality obviously hiking the price. It has 230mm ground clearance, a Borg Warner transfer case with 2H, 4H and 4LOW settings, and it also has a Dana rear differential. It's a tough drivetrain that can handle some punches. However, for now the lack of a rear differential lock means it can't quite go where the rest of the bakkie clan can safely go. **LW choice:** 2.8TD 4x4 Comfort. **Also look at:** GWM Steed 5, Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton, Toyota Hilux



**GWM** Toll free 011 805 6621 Website [www.gwm.co.za](http://www.gwm.co.za)

M4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5	189 900	4/1.5	77/6000	138/4200	7.2

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 45 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a » The M4 is GWM's attempt at a small crossover. And overall, this is an impressive little car that offers exceptional value for money. It boasts loads of features. It even has a five-year/100 000km warranty and a five-year 45 000km service plan. Just don't take it very far off road! **LW choice:** We'll take it. **Also look at:** Nissan Juke, Ford EcoSport, Suzuki SX4



STEED 5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2L Lux	184 900	4/2.2	78/4600	190/2400	10.2
2.4L Lux	214 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.7
2.4L 4x4 Lux	239 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.7
2.0WGT SX	229 900	4/2.0TD	78/4000	225/1400	9.3
2.0VGT Lux	259 900	4/2.0TD	110/3600	310/1800	8.3
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux	289 900	4/2.0TD	110/3600	310/1800	8.3

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a » As far as Chinese double cabs go, the Steed is one of the best. Sure, it's ultimately not as refined or as plush as its Japanese counterparts, but it's loaded with



standard kit. Prices remain very competitive. Armed with a reasonable amount of ground clearance (195mm), and an electronic Borg Warner 4x4 system with low-range, the 4x4 Steed can go where most other double cabs go, albeit in a less refined manner. **LW choice:** 2.0 VGT double cab. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, Nissan NP300 Hardbody

STEED 5E	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 SX	239 900	4/2.4	93/5250	200/2500	10.7
2.4 Xscape	256 900	4/2.4	93/5250	200/2500	10.7
2.0VGT SX	269 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.3
2.0VGT Xscape	289 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.3

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

New » GWM South Africa now offers a more upmarket version of the Steed called the 5E. It is still basically a Steed, and has the same engine options, but is more luxurious and well equipped than the standard Steed 5 model. Considering the pricing, the 5E offers a whole lot of bakkie for your money, and is a great option for a leisure vehicle. **LW Choice:** 2.0 VGT Xscape. **Also look at:** Standard Steed 5, Steed 6, Foton Tunland, JMC Vigus



H5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 City	244 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.4 Lux	249 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.4 4x4 Lux	269 900	4/2.4	100/5200	200/4000	10.3
2.0VGT Lux	284 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	7.6
2.0VGT Lux auto	319 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	9.2
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux	319 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	7.6
2.0VGT 4x4 Lux auto	339 900	4/2.0TD	110/4000	310/1800	9.2

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 74 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » The H5 certainly looks the part of the modern crossover/SUV/4x4. Inside it is loaded with standard kit, but some observers may not like the copycat exterior lines. Still, pricing is keen, and the 310 Nm turbodiesel version looks really good on paper. With 180mm ground clearance and Borg Warner low-range 4x4 system, the H5 4x4 derivative can go where few drivers of 4x4s costing double the price will expect it to go. **LW choice:** H5 2.0VGT 4x4. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport



H6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.5T City	259 900	4/1.5T	105/5600	210/2200	8.5
1.5T Lux	279 900	4/1.5T	105/5600	210/2200	8.5
2.0TCI Lux	349 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	310/1800	6.7

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 58 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » The H6 is GWM's attempt at a more urban crossover vehicle. With Subaru Forester-like good looks and a decent price tag, the H6 should do well. No AWD model available, though. **LW choice:** 2.0TCI. **Also look at:** Ford Kuga, Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V



STEED 6	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0VGT SX	299 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.8
2.0VGT Xscape	329 900	4/2.0TD	105/4000	305/1800	8.8

**Service plan:** Optional 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:**

New » Following the release of JMC's Vigus and Foton's Tunland, GWM has now also released its own large bakkie than offers the size and dimensions of those double cabs offered by established brands. The Steed 6 is an excellent vehicle overall, and shows how quickly GWM is improving. The cabin is wonderfully plush and has a European feel. Engine could use a tad more power, but that's hardly a deal-breaker. **LW Choice:** 2.0 VGT Xscape. **Also look at:** Foton Tunland, JMC Vigus, Steed 5E



**HONDA** Toll free 011 805 6621 Website [www.honda.co.za](http://www.honda.co.za)

CR-V	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Comfort	355 900	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.7
2.0 Comfort auto	370 900	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.6
2.0 Elegance	404 100	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.7
2.0 Elegance auto	419 100	4/2.0	114/6500	192/4300	7.6
2.4 Executive AWD	520 900	4/2.4	140/7000	220/4300	8.6
2.4 Exclusive AWD	557 800	4/2.4	140/7000	220/4300	8.6

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 58 litres. **Average sales per month:** 205 » The sleek CR-V is a highly accomplished option in its segment, but



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don't expect to be left breathless with excitement when you drive it. It is extremely well put together, and has an impeccable reliability record. A new version was recently introduced that has added a whole lot of value for money options to the line-up. The Honda doesn't come close to being a real off-roader (ground clearance is limited and no low range is fitted). But then it doesn't pretend to be an off-roader, either. **LW choice:** 2.0 Comfort. **Also look at:** Nissan X-Trail, Renault Koleos, Toyota RAV4, Ford Kuga



**HYUNDAI** Toll free 0861 4272 22 Website [www.hyundai.co.za](http://www.hyundai.co.za)

ix35	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Premium	334 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Premium Special Edition	354 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Premium auto	349 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0 Premium auto Special Edition	369 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0 Executive	374 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Executive Special Edition	389 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.5
2.0 Elite	399 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.8
2.0 Elite Special Edition	414 900	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.8
1.7CRDi Premium	359 900	4/1.7TD	85/4000	260/1250	5.3
1.7CRDi Premium Special Edition	379 900	4/1.7TD	85/4000	260/1250	5.3
2.0CRDi Elite	429 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	383/1800	6.5
2.0CRDi Elite Special Edition	449 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	383/1800	6.5
2.0CRDi 4WD Elite	489 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.2
2.0CRDi 4WD Elite Special Edition	509 900	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.2

**Service Plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 58 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » This CUV is even less intended for serious off-road use than the Tucson was. But the ix35 is a comfortable, affordable on-roader/soft-roader with trendy SUV looks. Mind, trendy is what sells cars in this segment, and the ix35 has got that department covered. The 4x4 derivatives get an electronic 4x4 system that apportions torque to slipping wheels, as required. 170mm limits its off-road range, though. Low-profile tyres and rough gravel roads also don't mix well. So it's good for good gravel, a wee bit of mud, and tar. **LW choice:** 2.0 Premium. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Nissan Qashqai, Ford Kuga, VW Tiguan



SANTA FE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDi Premium	554 900	4/2.2TD	145/3800	436/1800	8.0
2.2CRDi 4WD Executive	579 900	4/2.2TD	145/3800	436/1800	8.3
2.2CRDi 4WD Elite	634 900	4/2.2TD	145/3800	436/1800	8.3

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 64 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » Hyundai's Sante Fe is powered by the same 2,2-litre turbodiesel engine that did service in the previous range, so it gets 145 kW/436 Nm. A new addition is a FWD only model, and the six-speed automatic gearbox is standard across the range. It's also loaded with standard kit, including the latest in electronic safety systems. The latest Santa Fe has 185mm ground clearance – down 15mm from the previous generation Santa Fe's 200mm. With its on-demand 4x4 system (on the top models), the lack of low-range and an on-road bias for the suspension, the Santa Fe is now even more limited to gravel, and a tiny bit of mud and sand. **LW choice:** 2.2CRDi Premium. **Also look at:** Kia Sorento, Nissan Pathfinder, Toyota Fortuner



**INFINITI** Toll free 0800 771 771 Website [www.infiniti.co.za](http://www.infiniti.co.za)

QX50	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0d	596 949	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.0d GT	637 824	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.0d GT Premium	679 230	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	8.5
3.7 GT	629 070	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.2
3.7 GT Premium	670 476	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.2

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 2. »

Infiniti's EX medium-sized crossover has been renamed to the QX50. It offers a lot of luxury, and decent engines, but can Infiniti coax buyers out of their German vehicles? A good vehicle, but probably too pricey or its own good. **LW Choice:** 3.0d GT. **Also look at:** Audi Q5, BMW X3, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Lexus NX, Volvo XC60



QX70	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.7 GT	699 500	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 GT Premium	761 600	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S	760 600	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S Premium	803 600	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3
3.7 S Black	817 100	V6/3.7	235/7000	360/5200	12.3

3.0d GT	721 500	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d GT Premium	783 600	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S	782 600	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S Premium	825 600	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
3.0d S Black	839 100	V6/3.0TD	175/3750	550/1750	9.0
5.0 S Premium	916 600	V8/5.0	287/6500	500/4400	13.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 90 litres. **Average sales per month:** 2 » Like the QX50, the QX70 faces an uphill battle. It is undoubtedly a very sporty and refined SUV, but its price places it in the same category as the German brands. If you want something different but still impressive, the QX70 is worth a look. **LW choice:** 3.0d GT. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Range Rover Sport, Porsche Cayenne



QX80	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
5.6	1 238 000	V8/5.6	298/5800	560/4000	14.8

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 98 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a » The Infiniti QX80 is a humungous vehicle with a price tag to match. At the price it's certainly not cheap, but it offers better value for money than all of its main competitors. The 5,6-litre V8 is an absolute joy. It has loads of torque low down in the rev range, making it perfect for dune driving. The noises it makes are also lovely to listen to. It does consume an awful lot of fuel, though. **LW choice:** only one model **Also look at:** Range Rover, Lexus LX570, Mercedes Benz GL



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KB	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
<b>Extended Cab</b>					
250D-Teq LE	327 800	4/2.5TD	85/3600	280/1800	7.7
300D-Teq LX	391 600	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.8
300D-Teq LX auto	405 100	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq 4x4 LX	449 200	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9
<b>Double Cab</b>					
250D-Teq LE	401 500	4/2.5TD	85/3600	280/1800	7.7
250D-Teq 4x4 LE	424 400	4/2.5TD	85/3600	280/1800	7.9
300D-Teq LX	445 700	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.8
300D-Teq LX auto	460 300	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq LX Serengeti	491 200	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.8
300D-Teq LX Serengeti auto	505 700	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.7
300D-Teq 4x4 LX	505 600	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9
300D-Teq 4x4 LX Serengeti	551 100	4/3.0TD	130/3600	380/1800	7.9

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**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 641 (March) ➤ For the most part, this is an all-new KB, though it uses the previous generation's D-Teq engine. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing, mind you, since the engine is tough, capable and dependable. With its tough underpinnings, low-range gearing and rear diff lock, the KB can run with the best double cabs. The only thing that it lacks is stability control, which is found in most of the latest double cabs. **LW choice:** 250 D-Teq 4x4 LE. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, Mitsubishi Triton, Ford Ranger



it did before. But, it's now just way better! The Rubicon models, with even lower low-range gears, front and rear diff locks, a solid axle at both ends and heavy-duty rock rails, really can 4x4! **LW choice:** Unlimited 3.6L Rubicon. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 70 / FJ Cruiser, Landy Defender, Rooikat armoured vehicle

CHEROKEE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4L Longitude	500 990	4/2.4	130/6400	229/3900	8.3
3.2L Limited	536 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	9.5
3.2L 4x4 Limited	592 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	10.0
3.2L 4x4 Trailhawk	654 990	V6/3.2	200/6500	315/4300	10.0

**Maintenance plan:** 6 years / 100 000km

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres **Average sales per month:**

74. ➤ Jeep's popular Cherokee has undergone a very dramatic reinvention. The latest model looks nothing like its predecessor, and is based on the same underpinnings as the Dodge Dart, which means it is essentially a crossover. The new Cherokee is also available in FWD. That said, the vehicle is apparently still very capable off road, with the "Trail Rated" Trailhawk model sporting low-range gearing, good ground clearance and all sorts of off-road aids. Build quality is truly excellent, but this increase in quality is reflected in the pricing. The Cherokee is a very pricey compact SUV. **LW choice:** 3.2 FWD Limited. **Also look at:** BMW X3, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Subaru Forester, Audi Q5, Lexus NX, Infiniti QX50, Volvo XC60



GRAND CHEROKEE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.6L Limited	724 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
3.6L Overland	799 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
3.6L Summit	885 990	V6/3.6	210/6350	347/4300	10.4
3.0CRD Limited	829 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
3.0CRD Overland	899 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
3.0CRD Summit	985 990	V6/3.0TD	179/3600	569/1800	7.5
5.7L Overland	835 990	V8/5.7	259/5200	520/4200	13.0
SRT8	1 099 990	V8/6.4	344/6250	624/4100	14.0

**Maintenance plan:** 6 years / 100 000 km.

**Fuel tank:** 94 litres. **Average sales per**

**month:** 190. ➤ Jeep's Grand Cherokee is big, bold and capable. In fact, it boasts almost all the bells and whistles you'd find in the BMW X5 and Discovery 4. The new family face as well as an updated, eight-speed gearbox were added in August 2013, with the engine line-up and drive train unchanged. **LW choice:** 3.6 Overland. **Also look at:** BMW X5, Land Rover Discovery, Range Rover Sport, Mercedes ML



**JMC Tel 011 668 0300 Website: www.jmcsa.co.za**

JMC VIGUS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 LX	239 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.2
2.4 SLX	269 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.2
2.4 4x4 LX	305 990	4/2.4	95/5300	201/4000	10.7
2.4TDCi LX	269 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.0
2.4TDCi SLX	299 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.0
2.4TDCi 4WD LX	335 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.2
2.4TDCi 4WD SLX	365 990	4/2.4TD	88/3800	290/1600	8.2

**Service plan:** 5 year / 60 000km

**Fuel tank:** 68 – 74 litres **Average sales per**

**month:** n/a ➤ The Vigus is JMC's best product yet, but it's still not on par with the mainstream double-cab bakkies, nor a few other Chinese products. If price is the main consideration, then it's definitely worth looking at. The engines are based on powertrains that have been around for years. They're down on power compared to the competitors, but at least you know the engine is going to last. **LW choice:** a diesel 4x4 **Also look at:** Foton Tunland, SsangYong Actyon Sports, used Hilux or Ranger.



**KIA Tel 011 457 0200 Website: www.kia.co.za**

SPORTAGE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Ignite	339 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0	369 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0 auto	381 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0 AWD	404 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.7
2.0 AWD auto	416 995	4/2.0	116/6200	192/4000	8.9
2.0CRDi	399 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	382/1800	6.7
2.0CRDi auto	411 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0CRDi AWD	434 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	382/1800	6.7
2.0CRDi AWD auto	446 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3
2.0CRDi AWD Explore	488 995	4/2.0TD	130/4000	392/1800	7.3

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 55 litres. **Average sales per**

**month:** n/a ➤ The latest Sportage is a great vehicle. Smart, good looking, safe, luxurious... it's got it all. Sharing its underpinnings with the Hyundai ix35, the Kia

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RENEGADE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6L Longitude	340 990	4/1.6	81/5500	152/4500	6.0
1.4L T Limited	375 990	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	6.0
1.4L T Limited Launch Edition	375 990	4/1.4T	103/5000	230/1750	6.0
1.6L Multijet Limited	389 990	4/1.6TD	88/3750	320/1750	4.6
1.4L T 4x4 Limited	435 990	4/1.4T	125/5500	250/2500	6.9
2.4L 4x4 Trailhawk	450 990	4/2.4	137/6250	232/3900	9.8

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 48 litres. **Average sales per month:** New

➤The Renegade is a new sort of Jeep for a new sort of customer. Sure, it still boasts rugged off-road styling, but this is an SUV more at home in an urban environment than out in the bundu. More off-road oriented versions will arrive later on, but for now the Renegade is available in 4x2 only. Still, it can handle some pretty ugly gravel roads, so it should be a popular choice amongst trendy weekend warriors. It is (very) pricey, but finishes are undeniably premium. While the styling is Jeep, everything underneath is basically a Fiat 500X. The vehicle is even built in Italy. **LW Choice:** 1.4 Limited. **Also look at:** Mini Countryman, Nissan Qashqai



COMPASS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0L Limited	377 990	4/2.0	115/6300	190/5100	7.6
2.0L Limited auto	390 990	4/2.0	115/6300	190/5100	8.2

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 51 litres. **Average sales per month:** 193

➤The Compass looks reasonably sporty and seems to be well-equipped for the price, but the two-litre engine battles a bit at Highveld altitude. Price is good though. Jeep makes no pretensions of this Compass being a pukka 4x4. It is front-wheel driven, with 205mm ground clearance and traction control – so it can get you to a few 4x4-ish places, but it is much happier on a gravel road than a 4x4 track. **LW choice:** A Hemi V8 version? Pretty please? **Also look at:** Mitsubishi Outlander, Subaru Forester



PATRIOT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4L Limited	376 990	4/2.4	125/6000	220/4500	8.5
2.4L Limited auto	391 990	4/2.4	125/6000	220/4500	9.0

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per**

**month:** 16. ➤ The Patriot shares its platform and underpinnings with the Compass, but in a chunkier, more manly package. The electronic 4x4 system provides more grip on wet roads, on sand and in mud. But that's the extent of the Patriot's 4x4 abilities. **LW choice:** 2.4L Limited. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi Outlander, VW Tiguan, Toyota RAV4



WRANGLER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.6L Sahara	484 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.0
3.6L Rubicon	509 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.4
3.6L Rubicon X	541 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.4
Unlimited					
3.6L Sahara	529 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.7
3.6L Altitude	542 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.7
3.6L Rubicon	554 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.9
3.6L Rubicon X	579 990	V6/3.6	209/6350	347/4300	11.9
2.8CRD Sahara	589 990	4/2.8TD	147/3600	460/1600	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per**

**month:** 119. ➤ The Wrangler has genuine go-anywhere abilities, a turbodiesel engine option, an electronic stability programme and traction control, the option of four doors, and reasonably good quality. The latest generation V6 petrol engine has done wonders for eradicating that archaic driving experience of older Wranglers. Overall the Wrangler is still iconic, legendary, and looks just like





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has, like the Hyundai, lost a bit of its off-road character in favour of improved on-road performance. Pricing is extremely competitive, and some of Kia's more mainstream opposition must be a little bit worried about the latest wave of Kia products. With only 172 millimetres ground clearance and no low-range, the 4x4 models are more suited to slippery roads than driving through dongas. On gravel it is okay, but the trendy low-profile tyres are not very happy on rough surfaces. **LW choice:** 2.0 Ignite. **Also look at:** Hyundai ix35, Nissan Qashqai, Volkswagen Tiguan



SORENTO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDi	459 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	436/1800	7.2
2.2CRDi 4WD	555 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	436/1800	7.4
2.2CRDi 4WD Adventure	585 995	4/2.2TD	147/3800	436/1800	7.4

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km  
**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a. **>>** The Sorento is a real good looking, and an excellent turbodiesel engine powers it. Overall, it's a great soft-roading package. The 208mm ground clearance, permanent 4x4 and low-range transfer case of the previous Sorento are all gone, and in is an electronic 4x4 "on-demand" system, and 184mm clearance. Sure, you get fancy electronics such as Downhill Brake Control and Hill-start Assist Control, but the latest Sorento is no longer a pukka off-roader. The Sorento recently received a midlife makeover. **LW choice:** 2.2CRDi 5-seater. **Also look at:** Nissan X-Trail, Honda CR-V



DEFENDER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
90 TD station wagon S	543 800	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
90 TD station wagon Silver	584 800	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
90 TD station wagon Black	584 300	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	10.0
110 TD station wagon S	583 200	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
110 TD station wagon Silver	627 500	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
110 TD station wagon Black	634 600	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
110 TD double cab S	602 400	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1
130 TD crew cab E	611 300	4/2.2TD	90/3500	360/2000	11.1

**Service plan:** None **Fuel tank:** 60 litres for Defender 90; 75 litres for Defender 110/130.. **Average sales per month:** 42. **>>** The Defender is now powered by a 2.2-litre four-cylinder turbodiesel engine with emissions that conform to Euro V standards. Still, it's a Defender, so you also get that gap between some panels, and the handling in corners is not exactly dynamic. But off-road, it still rates as one of the best. It's a legend in its own time. The permanently four-wheel-driven Defender is just about as good as it gets. In the past the lack of a standard rear diff lock was it's only downfall on axle twisters, but with the advent of the advanced traction control system, it doesn't stop. Well... mostly not. The new 2.2-litre engine is also up to the off-road task. **LW choice:** 110 station wagon. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 70, Jeep Wrangler, a Sherman tank?



DISCOVERY SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
TD4 S	545 901	4/2.2TD	110/3500	400/1750	6.0
SD4 S	595 020	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 S	598 200	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
SD4 SE	640 320	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 SE	643 500	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
SD4 HSE	697 020	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 HSE	700 200	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3
SD4 HSE Luxury	736 120	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 HSE Luxury	739 300	4/2.0T	177/5800	340/1750	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000km  
**Fuel tank:** 65 litres **Average sales per month:** **>>** The Land Rover Freelander is no more. Instead, we now have the Discovery Sport – a vehicle that is sportier and more stylish than its predecessor. The Freelander was never a phenomenal sales success for Land Rover SA, but the Disco Sport appears set to follow in the prosperous footsteps of the full-size Discovery, Evoque and Range Rover Sport. The Disco Sport isn't a hardcore 4x4, but it is an excellent all-round SUV – offering a good mix of on-road and off-road performance. If you're looking for a compact SUV that can play in the dirt, the Disco Sport is worth looking at. **LW choice:** SD 4 AT S **Also look at:** Jeep Cherokee, BMW X3, Subaru Forester, Volvo XC60



RANGE ROVER EVOQUE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SD4 Pure	647 722	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
SD4 SW1 Monochrome	688 722	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3

Si4 Pure	655 190	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
SD4 Dynamic	751 522	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
SD4 SW1 Colour	786 622	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
SD4 NW8	786 622	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 Dynamic	759 090	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
Si4 NW8	794 190	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
coupé SD4 Dynamic	764 312	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.2
coupé Si4 Dynamic	771 890	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3
SD4 Autobiography	799 922	4/2.2TD	140/3500	420/1750	6.3
Si4 Autobiography	807 290	4/2.0T	177/5500	340/1750	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 58 litres for SD4; 70 for Si4.

**Average sales per month:** 143. **>>** Stylish and fashionable, the baby Range Rover can actually go the off-road mile too. Classy, luxurious, trendy, seriously good looking – the Evoque is a fashion model for the road and dirt. Sure, it doesn't have low range, but it gets the brand's Terrain Response system, as well as at least 215mm ground clearance, and electronic tricks such as hill descent control. Add lots of horses to the package, and the Evoque can stay with at least a Freelander in a tough off-road environment. And that's pretty good! **LW choice:** SD4. **Also look at:** Porsche Macan, BMW X4, Infiniti QX50



DISCOVERY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
TDV6 XS	717 286	V6/3.0TD	155/4000	520/1500	8.8
SDV6 S	853 486	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8
SCV6 SE	910 629	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	12.0
SDV6 SE	911 286	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8
SCV6 HSE	1 009 029	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	12.0
SDV6 HSE	1 009 686	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	8.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 82 litres for TDV6/SDV6; 86 for SCV6

**Average sales per month:** 172. **>>** Building on the impressive Disco III, with an even better 4x4 system, the Disco 4 is more competent on road and low quality has been addressed in the latest two versions. So, is Disco 4 now perfect? Well, it's very, very close. Armed with Landy's comprehensive and now updated Terrain Response System and air suspension (XS model has coil springs), the Disco can go anywhere, anytime. Nuff said. It is one of the best off-roader and on-road combination packages on the market today. **LW choice:** 3.0 TDV6 XS. **Also look at:** Mercedes-Benz ML, VW Touareg, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado



RANGE ROVER SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
SCV6 S	964 074	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3

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TDV6 S	988 031	V6/3.0TD	183/4000	600/2000	7.9
SCV6 SE	1 062 974	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3
SDV6 SE	1 147 431	V6/3.0TD	215/4000	600/2000	7.9
SCV6 HSE	1 253 574	V6/3.0S	250/6500	450/3500	11.3
SDV6 HSE	1 366 031	V6/3.0TD	215/4000	600/2000	7.9
Supercharged HSE Dynamic	1 487 123	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 HSE Dynamic	1 497 083	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1750	8.7
Supercharged Autobiography Dynamic	1 628 323	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 Autobiography Dynamic	1 635 483	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1750	8.7
SVR	1 885 925	V8/5.0S	405/6000	680/3500	13.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 85 litres for SDV6; 105 for other **Average sales per month:** 135. >> The latest Range Rover Sport is a huge step up from the previous model in all aspects. The first Sport was based on the underpinning of the Disco, making it more of a Disco Sport than a Range Sport, really. The new one, though, is very impressive. It is lighter, sportier, prettier and far more plush than the old one. A real competitor in its segment. **LW choice:** SDV6 HSE. **Also look at:** Porsche Cayenne, Mercedes-Benz ML, BMW X5/X6, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Volvo XC90



RANGE ROVER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
TDV6 Vogue	1 525 578	V6/3.0TD	190/4000	600/2000	8.6
SDV8 Vogue SE	1 820 683	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
Supercharged Vogue SE	1 876 225	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
SDV8 Autobiography	2 068 383	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
Supercharged Autobiography Range Rover L	2 123 925	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
L SDV8 Autobiography	2 154 583	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
L Supercharged Autobiography	2 210 125	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8
L SDV8 Autobiography Black	2 828 483	V8/4.4TD	250/3500	740/1700	8.7
L Supercharged Autobiography Black	2 884 125	V8/5.0S	375/6000	625/2500	13.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 85 litres for TDV6; 105 for other **Average sales per month:** 15. >> It's as extravagant as a 100-person philharmonic orchestra, as elegant as the Queen herself, yet it is also as resilient as Bear Grylls when the going gets tough. It's the new Range Rover, now sporting an all-aluminium monocoque construction, and it is as decadent and as capable as ever. It has more technology than the Airbus A380, and enough plush luxury to keep Prince Charles happy. Moreover, it has all the gadgets and gears, and can go anywhere. But, even if that Lotto ticket comes through, we wouldn't want to test the Rangy's ultimate capabilities on a rough 4x4 track. It may get scratched! **LW choice:** SDV8 Autobiography. **Also look at:** Porsche Cayenne, Mercedes-Benz GL, Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Audi Q7



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NX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
200t E	539 900	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
200t EX	579 900	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
200t F-Sport	659 900	4/2.0T	175/4800	350/1650	7.9
300h EX	633 000	4/2.5e	145e	210+e	6.0

**Maintenance plan:** 4 years / 100 000km **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 15. >> Lexus' latest vehicle – the NX – is a compact and very stylish SUV. It has bold and aggressive styling that is sure to be controversial, but is undeniably eye-catching. Since this is a Lexus, its cabin is a joy to spend time in, and boasts every creature comfort imaginable. Shortcomings? Well, there are no diesel engines on offer. However, its turbopetrol mill is a great one. The Lexus NX isn't a hardcore 4x4, but it is a great fashion accessory. It even comes with its own little make-up mirror in the centre console! **LW choice:** NX 200t EX. **Also look at:** BMW X3 / X4, Land Rover Discovery Sport / Range Rover Evoque, Audi Q5, Jeep Cherokee, Volvo XC60



RX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
350 EX	734 100	V6/3.5	204/6200	346/4700	10.6
450h SE	932 600	V6/3.5e	220e	±550e	6.3

**Maintenance plan:** 4 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 72 litres for 350; 65 for 450h **Average sales per month:** 10. >> The latest Lexus RX is sleeker and more sophisticated than ever before. It was never designed for driving up Baboon's Pass, but instead offers an immensely classy and outstanding driving experience on tar,

and a little bit of gravel. Anyone who wants to know what the term "refinement" means, just needs to take a spin in an RX. The hybrid offers the best of several worlds. We used to say that the RX, with its electronic 4x4 system, is only good on gravel. But after the hybrid version conquered Sani Pass we have to concede – it's still no pukka 4x4, but it certainly went places we never thought it could. **LW choice:** 450h SE. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Mercedes-Benz ML, Infiniti QX70, Volvo XC90



LX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
570 SE	1 350 900	V8/5.7	270/5600	530/3200	14.8

**Maintenance plan:** 4 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 93 litres. **Average sales per month:** 11 >> If a Toyota Land Cruiser 200 is not quite posh and exclusive enough for you, here's the answer: the Lexus LX570. Essentially a Cruiser 200 under different sheet metal, with all the off-road goodies, this super-Cruiser features Lexus-ised styling, a new badge, and quite a lot more horsepower from a 5.7-litre V8 petrol engine, to fit in with the more upmarket "Lexus image". Luxury, performance and capability is out of the top drawer, as is refinement. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Toyota Land Cruiser 200, Range Rover, Mercedes-Benz GL



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QUANTO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDe	214 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	7.6

**Service plan:** 3 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 55 litres. **Average sales per month:** >> The Quanto is Mahindra's attempt at a funky compact SUV in the mould of the Fiat Panda. Predictably, it doesn't have an AWD system, which keeps cost down, but there's still a lot of competition around R200 000 mark. **LW choice:** A Scorpio. **Also look at:** GWM M4, Ford EcoSport, Renault Duster



SCORPIO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Pik-Up					
2.5TCI	233 995	4/2.5TD	74/3800	258/1800	9.9
2.5TCI 4x4	261 995	4/2.5TD	74/3800	258/1800	9.9
2.2CRDe	254 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe Adventure	287 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4	281 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 Adventure SUV	311 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe VLX	249 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe VLX Adventure	275 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 VLX	289 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8
2.2CRDe 4x4 VLX Adventure	315 995	4/2.2TD	89/4000	290/1600	8.8

**Service plan:** 3 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1. >> Still costing a fraction of the Big Name SUV prices, the Scorpio range offers a budget-priced alternative in the SUV and double cab markets. The new Adventure models are real value-for-money overlanders with bull bars, roof racks and more. An auto rear diff lock, shift-on-the-fly 4x4 selection, low-range gearing and a torque-laden engine means that for your money, you get decent off-roading ability. **LW choice:** Pik-Up 2.2CRDe 4x4. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, GWM Steed, Mahindra Bolero



XUV500	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.2CRDe W4	259 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	7.1
2.2CRDe W6	299 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	7.1
2.2CRDe W8	329 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	7.1
2.2CRDe W8 AWD	349 995	4/2.2TD	103/3750	330/1600	7.1

**Service plan:** 3 years / 60 000 km **Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 57. >> Mahindra's compact SUV offering offers a surprising amount of car for the money. Sure, the styling is quirky and different, but the engine and gearbox, combined with loads of standard features and kit make up for the quirkiness. It's not intended as a bundu basher and while the AWD system comes with a list of driver aids, it's not fitted with a low-range box. **LW choice:** 2.2 W8 4x2. **Also look at:** GWM H5



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BT-50	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
FreeStyle Cab					
2.2 SLX	302 500	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
3.2 SLE	350 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.3





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3.2 4x4 SLE	402 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.8
Double Cab					
2.2 SLE	370 400	4/2.2TD	110/3700	375/1500	7.7
3.2 SLE	402 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.3
3.2 SLE auto	412 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.1
3.2 4x4 SLE	454 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.8
3.2 4x4 SLE auto	466 400	5/3.2TD	147/3000	470/1750	9.7

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:**

164. » Mazda's new BT-50 may share its tough underpinnings with the Ford Ranger, but is clearly aimed more at the leisure than the workhorse market. The top-end models get all the latest safety and luxury kit. The styling polarizes opinions, but underneath it's just as capable as the other double cab bakkies in the leisure market. **LW choice:** 3.2 SLE auto. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Ford Ranger, VW Amarok



CX-5	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 Active	319 500	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.0 Active auto	329 300	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.0 Dynamic	329 600	4/2.0	121/6000	210/4000	6.4
2.2DE Active	378 300	4/2.2TD	110/4500	380/1800	5.7
2.5 Individual	408 700	4/2.5	141/5700	256/3250	6.9
2.2DE AWD Akeru	465 400	4/2.2TD	129/4500	420/2000	5.9

**Service plan:** 3 years / unlimited km

**Fuel tank:** 56 litres. **Average sales per month:**

116. » The Mazda CX-5 used to be the rather forgettable SUV, but a recent model revision has changed all that. The range now includes entry-level FWD models, as well as a diesel AWD derivative. It's very good on tar, but the inclusion of an AWD model means it's now much better when the going gets tough. Quality and space are on par with competitor vehicles. **LW choice:** 2.2 DE Akeru AWD. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi ASX, Nissan Qashqai, Hyundai ix35, Kia Sportage



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GLA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GLA200	440 849	4/1.6T	115/5300	250/1250	5.9
GLA200 auto	458 747	4/1.6T	115/5300	250/1250	5.9
GLA200CDI	465 000	4/2.1TD	100/3400	300/1400	4.5
GLA200CDI auto	483 000	4/2.1TD	100/3400	300/1400	4.5
GLA220CDI 4Matic	538 631	4/2.1TD	125/3400	350/1400	5.1
GLA250 4Matic	614 288	4/2.0T	155/5500	350/1200	6.6
GLA45 AMG 4Matic	790 843	4/2.0T	265/6000	450/2250	7.5

**Maintenance plan:** 6 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 50 litres for GLA200, 200CDI;

56 litres for 220CDI, 250 and 45 AMG **Average sales per month:** n/a. » All the models based on have been a massive success so far and we have little reason to believe that it'll be any different for the GLA. It's quite expensive, but it seems to be worth the money. **LW choice:** GLA 220 CDI 4Matic. **Also look at:** Audi Q3 / RS Q3, BMW X1, MINI Countryman, Subaru XV, Volvo V40 CrossCountry



ML	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
ML250 BlueTec	826 930	4/2.1TD	150/4200	500/1600	6.5
ML350 BlueTec	940 792	V6/3.0TD	190/3600	620/1600	7.4
ML400	963 952	V6/3.0T	245/5250	480/1400	9.6
ML500	1 165 647	V8/4.7T	300/5000	600/1600	12.3
ML63 AMG	1 694 206	V8/5.5T	386/5250	700/1750	11.8

**Maintenance plan:** 6 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 93 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a. » The ML comes standard with

Merc's 4MATIC four-wheel drive system, and ground clearance start at around 200mm. However, if you want to head off-road you can have the 350 diesel and petrol models with the optional ON&OFFROAD package. This adds low range gearing, air suspension with up to 285mm clearance, a manual option for the 7G Tronic gearbox, 100% centre differential lock, adapted off-road electronics, low range gearing and special protection plates under the vehicle. This package though, adds to the ML's sticker price. **LW choice:** ML250 BlueTec. **Also look at:** BMW X5, VW Touareg, Porsche Cayenne, Audi Q7, Infiniti QX70



GL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
GL350 BlueTec	1 163 031	V6/3.0TD	190/3600	620/1600	8.0
GL500	1 324 387	V8/4.7T	320/5250	700/1800	11.5
GL63 AMG	1 991 537	V8/5.5T	410/5250	760/2000	12.3

**Maintenance plan:** 6 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 100 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a. » If you like super-size meals,

super-size houses, and super-size swimming pools, the super-size GL may be just your thing. Since it was originally supposed to replace Merc's Gelandewagen 4x4, it gets all the tricks in the off-roading book. Ground clearance is 307mm and the Airmatic air suspension means it goes just about anywhere. It is also big on luxury and safety. Performance is plentiful too. **LW choice:** GL350 BlueTec. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Audi Q7, Land Rover Range Rover



G-CLASS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
G300CDI Professional	1 053 986	V6/3.0TD	135/3800	400/1600	11.7
G350 BlueTec	1 398 255	V6/3.0TD	155/3400	540/1600	11.2
G500	1 564 393	V8/5.5	285/6000	530/2800	14.9
G63 AMG	2 131 625	V8/5.5T	400/5500	760/2000	13.8

**Maintenance plan:** None for G300;

6 years / 100 000 km for G350/G500/G63

**Fuel tank:** 96 litres. **Average sales per month:**

n/a. » As the preferred 4x4 for a vast number of military organisations across the globe, the Merc's off-road pedigree and durability is legendary. This is as good as it gets. Recently Mercedes added two more models to range – including the 400 kW G63 AMG model. You got to ask: do you really want so much power in a G-wagon? Still, it goes anywhere, with front, centre and rear diff locks, low-range that's selectable on the move, a 600mm forging depth, Merc's 4ETS traction control system and enough ground clearance to clear just about anything. **LW choice:** G350 BlueTec. **Also look at:** A Second World War Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger tank



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MINI COUNTRYMAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cooper	343 283	4/1.6	90/6000	160/4250	6.5
Cooper auto	362 748	4/1.6	90/6000	160/4250	7.6
Cooper S	404 488	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	6.6
Cooper S auto	423 543	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	7.5
John Cooper Works ALL4	501 272	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.0
John Cooper Works ALL4 auto	518 890	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 75 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 41

» A MINI gets five doors and the option of four-wheel drive. Spacious, as trendy as anything you can think of, and pretty fast too, this Mini offers a lot of car for young jet setters. Of course,



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it's not a 4x4 that can tackle a tough off-road course. Rather just the muddy patch at the school's soccer field, with 149mm of ground clearance and a permanent all-wheel drive system with plenty of assist programmes. Oh, and it's expensive too. **LW choice:** Cooper S. **Also look at:** BMW X1, Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Audi Q3, Mercedes-Benz GLA

PACEMAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cooper S	404 488	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	6.6
Cooper S auto	423 543	4/1.6T	140/5500	260/1700	7.5
John Cooper Works ALL4	501 272	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.0
John Cooper Works ALL4 auto	518 890	4/1.6T	160/6000	300/2100	8.3

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 75 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 7. >> MINI's answer to the Evoque, the Paceman is the company's first "Sports Activity Coupe". While it's very similar to the Countryman it does have its own character, and with the ALL4 drivetrain offers quite a dynamic drive. Not truly meant for off-road but quite adept at traversing sticky or rutted roads, the Paceman is typically feature-packed and dynamic to drive. **LW choice:** Cooper S. **Also look at:** Range Rover Evoque Coupé, Nissan Juke



**MITSUBISHI** Tel 011 552 6000 Website [www.mitsubishi-motors.co.za](http://www.mitsubishi-motors.co.za)

ASX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 GL	299 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLX	334 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLS	347 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.5
2.0 GLS auto	359 900	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4200	7.4

**Service plan:** 5 year / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 63 litres. **Average sales per month:** 103. >> The funky ASX is aimed squarely at the lifestyle segment, and for now only front-wheel drive is available. It is loaded with kit, it is safe as houses, it has reasonable performance, and traction control with hill start assist on the GLS models. It's not incapable, but a true soft-roader with great space and user-friendly features. **LW choice:** 2.0 GL. **Also look at:** Jeep Compass, Nissan Juke, Citroen C4 Aircross



TRITON	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5DI-D ClubCab	299 900	4/2.5TD	100/3500	314/2000	8.2
2.5DI-D double cab	359 900	4/2.5TD	100/3500	314/2000	8.3
2.5DI-D 4x4 double cab	429 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	400/2000	8.6

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km for 4x2;

5 years / 90 000 km for 4x4 **Fuel tank:** 75 litres..

**Average sales per month:** 39 (March). >> If one looks past the love-it-or-hate-it styling cues, the Triton is a solid and dependable option in the leisure bakkie market. Pricing remains competitive, and with standard low-range and a rear diff lock, it can keep up with any 4x4 double cab bakkie on the trail. An all-new Triton arrives mid 2015. **LW choice:** 2.5DI-D 4x4 double cab. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, Nissan Navara



OUTLANDER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 GLS Exceed	439 900	4/2.4	123/6000	222/4100	8.2

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres.. **Average sales per month:**

4. >> Mitsubishi's Outlander recently received a minor facelift. As with the previous model, a petrol powerplant is your only option. It's not built for serious off-roading, but it can handle the odd ugly dirt road thanks to its 4WD system. Mitsubishi SA has always struggled to sell the Outlander, which is a shame, since it's a solid vehicle that offers good value for money. The new model's design is, well, unique, so some might be put off a bit, but overall, this is a solid compact SUV. **LW choice:** We'll take it. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, Toyota RAV4, Nissan X-Trail



PAJERO SPORT	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5DI-D auto	449 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	350/1800	8.5
2.5DI-D 4x4	484 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	400/2000	7.8
2.5DI-D 4x4 auto	499 900	4/2.5TD	131/4000	350/1800	8.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 59

>> The Triton-based Pajero Sport has just received a new engine. The old 3.2-litre Di-D engine has been replaced with a 2.5-litre diesel mill that develops 131 kW of power and 400 Nm of torque (the auto model only has 350 Nm, for some reason). With loads of space, second-



and third-row seating that fold completely flat, and a comfy three-link coil setup at the back, the Pajero Sport offers good value for money in a segment that is dominated by the Fortuner. At the moment, the Sport is available only in 4x4 guise, but a 4x2 model will hit showroom floors before the end of the year. **LW choice:** Di-D 4x4 manual. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner, Chevrolet Trailblazer, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Nissan Pathfinder

PAJERO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3-door 3.2DI-D GLS	579 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1
5-door 3.2DI-D GLS	649 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1
5-door 3.2DI-D GLS Exceed	669 900	4/3.2TD	140/3800	441/2000	10.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 69 litres for 3-door; 88 for 5-door

**Average sales per month:** 58. >> The big Mitsubishi is consummately reliable, able and 99.9% of the time up to the task at hand. Nevermind great space, kit and features, the Super Select 4WD-II system allows for 4x4 engagement at speeds of up to 100 km/h. In 4H a viscous coupling unit and centre diff can direct drive to the front wheels if the rear wheels lose traction. The centre diff can be locked for enhanced traction on slippery surfaces (4HLC), and a low-range option (4LLC) is for really tough stuff. Add a lockable diff at the back, and 235mm ground clearance... just watch those flashy side-steps. **LW choice:** 3.2 DI-D GLX 5-door. **Also look at:** Land Rover Discovery, VW Touareg, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado



**NISSAN** Toll free 0800 647 726 Website [www.nissan.co.za](http://www.nissan.co.za)

JUKE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.2T Acenta	254 900	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	5.6
1.2T Acenta+	277 900	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	5.6
1.5dCi Acenta+	299 900	4/1.5TD	81/4000	260/1750	4.0
1.6T Tekna	325 900	4/1.6T	140/5600	240/1600	6.9
1.6T 4WD Tekna	364 900	4/1.6T	140/5600	240/1600	6.5

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 46 litres. **Average sales per month:**

73. >> On the 'cool' metre the new Juke is about on the same level as the new Range Rover Evoque, yet it sells for less than half the price. The 140 kW version is one of the most surprisingly adept performance cars we've driven for a while. Ground clearance is only 180mm, so while they are a lot of fun on dirt roads, they're not trail vehicles. A 4WD version has recently been added to the line-up. **LW choice:** 1.5dCi Acenta+. **Also look at:** MINI Countryman/Paceman, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008



QASHQAI	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.2T Visia	287 500	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	6.2
1.2T Acenta	317 800	4/1.2T	85/4500	190/2000	6.2
1.2T Acenta auto	334 200	4/1.2T	85/5200	165/1750	6.2
1.5dCi Acenta	338 800	4/1.5TD	81/4000	260/1750	4.2
1.6T Acenta	364 800	4/1.6T	120/5600	240/2000	6.0
1.6dCi Acenta auto	392 100	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	4.9
1.6dCi AWD Acenta	393 400	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000km

**Fuel tank:** 65 litres. **Average sales per month:**

284. >> Nissan has replaced its popular Qashqai with an all-new model. Will it sell as well as its predecessor? We think so. The Qashqai still offers great value for money, with solid engine options and loads of practicality. Luggage space could be a little bit better, but overall, the Qashqai is a solid package. The new model also looks sportier and more attractive than the old model, so we're willing to bet Nissan has another winner on its hands. **LW choice:** 1.5 dCi Acenta. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Ford Kuga, VW Tiguan, Toyota RAV4, Mazda CX-5, Peugeot 2008



NP300 HARDBODY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5TDi Hi-rider	336 600	4/2.5TD	98/3600	304/2000	8.8
2.4 Hi-rider	317 800	4/2.4	105/5600	205/3600	11.0
2.4 4x4	384 000	4/2.4	105/5600	205/3600	11.7

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 75 litres. **Average sales per month:**

126 (March). >> The older Nissan Hardbody, rebadged the NP300, has been re-employed to cater for the entry-level double cab market, with attractive prices to match. It may be old, but it's far from cold, and still offers a lot of dependable bakkie at an attractive price. The 4x4 version gets low-range and a limited slip rear diff, and tough-as-nails underpinnings. So it can go the off-road





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mile, its only limiting factor being the L/S rear diff, instead of a locking version. **LW choice:** 2.5TDi. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, GWM Steed

X-TRAIL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 XE	327 700	4/2.0	102/5200	198/4400	8.3
2.5 4x4 SE	364 200	4/2.5	125/6000	226/4400	8.3
1.6dCi XE	351 000	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.1
1.6dCi 4x4 SE	388 300	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3
1.6dCi 4x4 LE	473 600	4/1.6TD	96/4000	320/1750	5.3

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years/90 000km  
**Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 319. >>

The X-Trail has undergone a very thorough exterior makeover. Gone is the boxy design of the old model, replaced with a sleek and sexy new exterior. That said, though, Nissan hasn't fiddled with its winning formula too much. The new X-Trail offers everything the old one did, but in a shiny and fancier package. A bunch of 4x2 models are available, but you can opt for a 4x4 version if you plan on tackling some gravel roads. Not a real off-roader, but a very practical family leisure vehicle. **LW choice:** 1.6 dCi SE. **Also look at:** Kia Sorento, Hyundai Santa Fe, Toyota RAV4, Honda CR-V



NAVARA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
KingCab					
2.5dCi XE	358 500	4/2.5TD	106/4000	356/2000	8.7
2.5dCi 4x4 XE	402 400	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	9.0
Double Cab					
2.5dCi XE	376 000	4/2.5TD	106/4000	356/2000	8.7
2.5dCi 4x4 XE	426 400	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	9.0
2.5dCi LE	443 900	4/2.5TD	128/4000	403/2000	8.3
2.5dCi 4x4 LE auto	509 100	4/2.5TD	140/4000	450/2000	9.0
3.0dCi V6 4x4 LE	653 100	V6/3.0TD	170/3750	550/1750	9.3

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres **Average sales per month:** 115 (March). >> It is a big and powerful double-cab bakkie, with a comfortable SUV-like ride, and spacious cabin. It looks pretty good too. The 4x4 versions get all the right gizmos, like low range and rear diff lock. If the pilot knows his or her stuff, the Navara can walk the walk with the best of the double cab brigade. **LW choice:** 2.5 dCi 4x4 LE. **Also look at:** Ford Ranger, Toyota Hilux, Isuzu KB, Mitsubishi Triton



PATHFINDER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5dCi SE	504 600	4/2.5TD	140/4000	450/2000	8.5
2.5dCi SE auto	520 600	4/2.5TD	140/4000	450/2000	9.0
2.5dCi LE	666 300	4/2.5TD	140/4000	450/2000	9.0
3.0dCi V6 LE	777 200	V6/3.0TD	170/3750	550/1750	9.3

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 4 >> It's big and powerful, with ample space and a lot of horses hiding under the bonnet. Luxury features abound, and the new entry level model has opened the range up to a whole new set of buyers. Ride quality is excellent, but rear suspension on the soft side for towing heavy rigs. The selectable 4x4 system comes with low range, a claimed 238mm of ground clearance and an Active Brake Limited Slip (ABLS) system. A new Pathfinder model has been released internationally, but won't be coming to SA just yet. **LW choice:** 2.5 dCi 4x4. **Also look at:** Toyota Fortuner / Land Cruiser Prado, Land Rover Discovery Sport / Discovery, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport / Pajero



PATROL	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0Di GL	700 600	4/3.0TD	118/3600	380/2000	10.8
4.8 GRX	795 100	6/4.8	190/4800	425/3600	17.7

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 135 litres. **Average sales per month:** 2. >> The legendary Patrol is incredibly capable off-road, comfortable as a long-distance cruiser, and features on many wish lists of ardent overlanding enthusiasts. But it's also somewhat impractical to use as daily transport, thanks to its sheer size, and its affection for especially petrol. **LW choice:** 4.8 GRX. **Also look at:** Toyota Land Cruiser 200, Mitsubishi Pajero



**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000km **Fuel tank:** 53 litres. **Average sales per month:** 173. >>

The Opel Mokka is the German manufacturer's first attempt at building a compact SUV and it has done a pretty decent job. The engine is powerful, yet frugal and the cabin is a class above its direct competitors. It's available in front-wheel drive only, which means you're better off staying on the tar. **LW choice:** 1.4T Cosmo. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 2008, MINI Countryman, Nissan Juke



**PEUGEOT** Tel. 0860 738 472 Website [www.peugeot.co.za](http://www.peugeot.co.za)

2008	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Active	249 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	5.9
1.6 Allure	277 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	5.9

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 30. >> One of the latest compact crossover to hit SA's shores, but it won't be crossing over anything anytime soon. It's available as a FWD only, but it comes with a peppery 1.6-litre naturally aspirated engine and funky styling. **LW choice:** 1.6 Allure. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Nissan Juke, Opel Mokka, Suzuki SX4



3008	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Access	289 900	4/1.6	88/6000	160/4250	6.7
1.6T Active	339 900	4/1.6T	115/6000	240/1400	6.9
2.0HDi Allure	417 900	4/2.0TD	120/3750	340/2000	6.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 5 >> The versatile Peugeot 3008 was recently given a facelift and this has turned it into one of the most attractive crossovers on the market. It's definitely tuned for on-road performance, which means it's a comfortable daily companion. A wide range of engines is available, so there's something for everyone. **LW choice:** 2.0 HDi Allure. **Also look at:** Nissan Qashqai, Hyundai ix35, Honda CR-V



**PORSCHE** Tel. 011 540 5000 Website [www.porsche.co.za](http://www.porsche.co.za)

MACAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
S diesel	884 000	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	580/1750	6.1
S	904 000	V6/3.0T	250/5500	460/1450	8.7
turbo	1 275 000	V6/3.6T	294/6000	550/1350	8.9

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 60 litres for S diesel; 65 for S;

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75 for turbo. **Average sales per month:** 30

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CAYENNE	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Cayenne	852 000	V6/3.6	220/6300	400/3000	9.2
diesel	933 000	V6/3.0TD	180/3800	550/1750	6.6
S	998 000	V6/3.6T	309/6000	550/1350	9.5
S e-hybrid	1 147 000	V6/3.0Se	306e	590e	3.4
S diesel	1 165 000	V8/4.1TD	283/3750	850/2000	8.0
GTS	1 176 000	V6/3.6T	324/6000	600/1600	9.8
turbo	1 779 000	V8/4.8T	382/6000	750/2250	11.2
turbo S	2 255 000	V8/4.8T	419/6000	800/2500	11.5

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 100 litres. **Average sales per month:** 56 » By now, the Cayenne has more than proven itself as a luxury off-roader. It has power, torque, space, gadgetry, driver aids and off-road aids that most could only dream of. It has air suspension, lockers and good articulation, so it's capable, even if most drivers don't use it to its limits. As a driver's vehicle, the handling, road hold, passenger comfort and ride quality are superb. **LW choice:** S diesel. **Also look at:** BMW X5/X6, Range Rover Sport, Mercedes-Benz ML, Infiniti QX70, Volvo XC90



**RENAULT** Tel. 086 173 6285 Website [www.renault.co.za](http://www.renault.co.za)

DUSTER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 Expression	213 900	4/1.6	75/5850	145/3750	7.5
1.6 Dynamique	229 900	4/1.6	75/5850	145/3750	7.5
1.5dCi Dynamique	252 900	4/1.5TD	80/3900	240/2250	5.0
1.5dCi Dynamique 4WD	269 900	4/1.5TD	80/3900	240/1750	5.3

**Service plan:** 3 years / 45 000km **Fuel tank:** 50 litres. **Average sales per month:** 430 » The Duster is the car responsible for the reinvigoration of the Renault brand in SA. It comes with a nippy diesel engine and a lot of kit as standard. The 4WD model is also one of the cheapest all-wheel drive cars available in this country. **LW choice:** 1.5 dCi Dynamique 4WD. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, GWM M4, Mahindra Quanto



CAPTUR	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
66kW turbo Expression	219 900	3/0.9T	66/5250	135/2500	4.9
66kW turbo Dynamique	239 900	3/0.9T	66/5250	135/2500	4.9
88kW turbo Dynamique auto	279 900	4/1.2T	88/4900	190/2000	5.4

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 45 litres. **Average sales per month:** New. » Arriving the same time as the all-new Citroën Cactus is the Renault Captur. And like the Cactus, the Captur is a funky little crossover built for hip and trendy urbanites. The Captur is available in 2WD only, and unlike the Renault Duster, isn't really designed for the bundu. This is a pretty and well equipped compact crossover built for those who want the space and trendiness of an SUV, but don't need the off-road ability. As with the Cactus, pricing is very competitive. **LW Choice:** Dynamique 88kW Turbo EDC. **Also look at:** C4 Cactus, Ford EcoSport, Peugeot 2008, Opel Mokka



KOLEOS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5 Dynamique	339 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.6
2.5 4x4 Dynamique	369 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.9
2.5 4x4 Dynamique auto	399 900	4/2.5	126/6000	226/4400	9.6

**Service plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km **Fuel tank:** 65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1. » With 206mm of ground clearance and the Nissan X-Trail's All-Mode 4x4 system, the Koleos can go surprisingly far off the beaten track. But, no low range and other locking bits ensure that real off-roading is also not its thing. It much prefers dirt roads to dongas. The diesel model is no longer sold here, but the range still offers good value for buyers looking for something with X-Trail capability and a bit of flair. **LW choice:** 2.5 Dynamique. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail



**SSANGYONG** Tel. 012 661 3161 Website [www.mahindra.co.za](http://www.mahindra.co.za)

KORANDO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0	279 995	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4000	7.5
2.0 high	299 995	4/2.0	110/6000	197/4000	7.5
D20T high	339 995	4/2.0TD	129/4000	360/2000	6.1
D20T high auto	354 995	4/2.0TD	129/4000	360/2000	7.3
D20T 4x4 Deluxe	394 995	4/2.0TD	129/4000	360/2000	7.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 57 litres. **Average sales per month:** 17 » The new Korando is a modern crossover, featuring a monocoque design, and an independent suspension set-up. The latest Korando, boasting minor upgrades, looks amazingly normal, and it is now distributed here by Mahindra SA. Although it is cheaper in some instances, the service plan has also shrunk. It has 180mm ground clearance, and in the AWD model the system normally sends all the power to the front wheels but as soon as wheelslip is detected the rear wheels also get a piece of the action. The driver can also lock the system in a 50/50 split at speeds slower than 40km/h. **LW choice:** D20T high auto. **Also look at:** Kia Sportage, Hyundai ix35



ACTION SPORTS	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.3 4x4 high	289 995	4/2.3	110/5500	214/3500	12.4
2.0D high	309 995	4/2.0TD	114/4000	360/1500	7.4
2.0D 4x4 Deluxe	359 995	4/2.0TD	114/4000	360/1500	7.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 75 litres. **Average sales per month:** 26. » With upgraded looks and new engine options, the Actyon Sports is a highly competitive and capable double cab bakkie, although its load carrying capacity puts it below the rest. It's comfortable, has a good stability program and can be very dynamic off-road. It's not mean for trail driving, however, and can tackle medium grade courses with its low-range gearing. It's also great in sand and mud. **LW choice:** 2.0D high. **Also look at:** Tata Xenon, GWM Steed, Mahindra Scorpio



REXTON W	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
RX270XDi	394 995	5/2.7TD	121/4000	340/1800	8.6
RX270XDi Deluxe	449 995	5/2.7TD	121/4000	340/1800	9.0

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 78 litres. **Average sales per month:** 15. » Ssangyong has updated their large SUV, a seven-seater with a part-time 4x4 drivetrain and plenty of modern features like Bluetooth and cruise control. Drive can be locked in four-high or low-range gearing, making it a well equipped, affordable option. It's undoubtedly better looking, but the previous Rexton's sales figures won't be hard to beat, and Ssangyong has a long way to go to convince buyers to get behind the wheel. The update does, however, see considerable improvement to the interior. **LW choice:** RX270XDi. **Also look at:** GWM H5 4x4, Mahindra XUV500



**SUBARU** Tel. 011 608 0116 Website [www.subaru.co.za](http://www.subaru.co.za)

XV	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0i	317 300	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	8.0
2.0i auto	328 600	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	7.9
2.0i-S	364 600	b4/2.0	110/6200	196/4200	7.9

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 75 000 km **Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 4 » The funky XV, which is based on the Impreza hatch, is really cool piece of four-wheel driven kit. With the new models, it's highly competitive, and surprisingly capable off-road for a soft-roader. It's not as dynamic a drive as you might expect from Subaru, but it's a unique offering in a very competitive segment, with 220mm ground clearance and Subaru's highly capable all-wheel drive system. **LW choice:** 2.0i. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi ASX, Mercedes-Benz GLA



FORESTER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 X	349 000	b4/2.0	110/6200	198/4200	7.2
2.5 X	385 300	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.5 XS	419 200	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.5 XS Premium	462 500	b4/2.5	126/5800	235/4100	8.1
2.0 XT	539 300	b4/2.0T	177/5600	350/2400	8.5

**Maintenance plan:** 3 years / 75 000 km **Fuel tank:** 65 litres. **Average sales per month:** 24 » The good-looking Forester has just been refreshed and it's a dream to drive. The Forester has already won the hearts of many loyal fans, and with good



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reason. It's got great quality, practicality and the turbocharged XT is SUV performance heaven. It handles well both on and off-road, and the new X-Mode gives it a slight edge in the rough over the previous model. They've also spent a lot on developing a more fuel efficient Forester, which is bound to pay off in the sales department.

**LW choice:** 2.5 XS. **Also look at:** Suzuki Grand Vitara, Nissan X-Trail



OUTBACK	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5i-S Premium	479 000	b4/2.5	129/5800	235/4000	7.3
2.0D Premium	529 000	b4/2.0TD	110/3600	350/1600	6.3
3.6 R-S Premium	529 000	b6/3.6	191/6000	350/4400	9.9

**Service plan:** 3 year / 75 000km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a. >> The new Outback continues to build on

the reputation of the models that came before it. It's still practical, safe, luxurious and very well built. The new model's styling is a massive leap forward, but Subaru has played it safe in the engines department by carrying over all of the powertrains used in the previous model. **LW choice:** 2.0-litre turbodiesel CVT. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Volvo V60 Cross Country / XC70



**SUZUKI** Toll free: 0861 511 111 Website: [www.suzukiauto.co.za](http://www.suzukiauto.co.za)

JIMNY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.3	224 900	4/1.3	63/6000	110/4100	7.2
1.3 auto	239 900	4/1.3	63/6000	110/4100	7.6

**Service plan:** 4 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 40 litres. **Average sales per month:** 79

>> The Suzuki Jimny has a low-range transfer case, low weight, and a relatively powerful new 1.3-litre engine. Okay, so the Jimny is small, and it doesn't really enjoy long-distance trips. But, thanks to its size it makes light work of just about any 4x4 track. It is an economical runabout. It's luxurious and safe. Quality is good. We like it. A lot. Ground clearance is pegged at only 190mm, but thanks to the excellent approach and departure angles, small and nimble size, and tight turning circle, this won't affect the Jimny as much as it would a bigger vehicle. It can make a pukka 4x4 costing four times as much look rather silly on a tight 4x4 track. The only thing that may stop it is an axle twister – the Jimny does not have a rear diff lock or limited slip diff. **LW choice:** The Jimny, please! **Also look at:** Daihatsu Terios Off-road



SX4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.6 GL	265 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX	295 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX auto	318 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	5.8
1.6 GLX AllGrip	319 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	6.2
1.6 GLX AllGrip auto	341 900	4/1.6	86/6000	156/4000	6.2

**Service plan:** 3 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 47 litres. **Average sales per month:** 47 >> The

all-new Suzuki SX4 has landed, and it is quite a different vehicle to the outgoing model. It is sleeker, more refined, and quite a bit bigger. Overall, this is an impressive compact SUV that is well priced. It has loads of infotainment features, and even boasts top-notch safety features such as seven airbags. It is available with a CVT gearbox, but the manual is the one to go for. You probably won't be needing that 4WD system either, so the basic 4x2 model with the manual shifter should be your pick. Great value for money! **LW choice:** GLX manual. **Also look at:** Ford EcoSport, Mitsubishi ASX, Nissan Qashqai, Opel Mokka, Peugeot 2008



GRAND VITARA	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.4 Dune	325 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	8.9
2.4 Dune auto	340 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	9.9
2.4 Summit	395 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	8.9
2.4 Summit auto	411 900	4/2.4	122/6000	225/4000	9.9

**Service plan:** 6 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 66 litres. **Average sales per month:** 19

>> If compact SUVs were soccer players, the Grand Vitara would be English legend David Beckham. Just like Beckham, the Vitara is not only a trendy looker, but also surprisingly capable in its application.

The Suzuki's permanent 4x4 system transfers the engine's urge to both front and rear wheels via a torque-sensitive, limited-slip centre differential. The system offers three driving modes: 4H, 4H-Lock, and 4L-Lock. Add 206mm ground clearance, good wheel travel, tough 4x4 underpinnings and a mighty impressive traction control system, and the Grand Vitara can go places where few small SUVs will dare. **LW choice:** 2.4 Summit.

**Also look at:** Subaru Forester, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail, Toyota RAV4



**TATA** Phone: 0861 828272 Website: [www.tatasa.co.za](http://www.tatasa.co.za)

XENON	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
3.0L DLE	192 995	4/3.0TD	85/3000	300/1800	10.0
XT 2.2L	254 995	4/2.2TD	110/4000	320/1500	9.0
XT 2.2L 4x4	294 495	4/2.2TD	110/4000	320/1500	9.0

**Service plan:** None for 3.0L; 5 years / 75 000 km for 2.2L and XT **Fuel tank:** 65 litres for 3.0L / 2.2L

70 for XT. **Average sales per month:** 51. >>

What a difference the new, more modern

2.2-litre engine has made to the Xenon. The latest Xenon, now with about 300 improvements

over the original model, is not perfect, but it can go the off-road mile, it can gobble up open-road kilometres, and it can handle the city slog too. It just does it in a less refined manner than say, a Hilux. But considering that it sells for half the price of a new Hilux... who needs refinement, anyway? **LW choice:** 2.2 4x4. **Also look at:** GWM Steed, Mahindra Scorpio Pick-Up, a used double-cab



**TOYOTA** Phone: 011 809-9111 Website: [www.toyota.co.za](http://www.toyota.co.za)

HILUX	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Xtra Cab					
2.5D-4D SRX	309 300	4/2.5TD	75/3600	260/1600	n/a
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45	387 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45	445 600	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a
3.0D-4D Raider Dakar	393 100	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Dakar	451 400	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	n/a

Double Cab

2.7 Raider Legend 45	391 300	4/2.7	118/5200	241/3800	10.8
2.7 Raider Dakar	396 700	4/2.7	118/5200	241/3800	10.8
2.5D-4D 4x4 SRX	413 000	4/2.5TD	75/3600	260/1600	8.7
2.5D-4D Raider Legend 45	426 400	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	8.0
2.5D-4D Raider Dakar	431 800	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	8.0
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45	453 800	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D Raider Legend 45 auto	467 900	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
3.0D-4D Raider Dakar	459 200	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D Raider Dakar auto	473 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45	513 000	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Legend 45 auto	527 300	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Dakar	518 400	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider Dakar auto	532 700	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.7
4.0 V6 Raider Legend 45	467 100	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0
4.0 V6 4x4 Raider Legend 45	552 800	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0
4.0 V6 Raider Dakar	472 500	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0
4.0 V6 4x4 Raider Dakar	558 200	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.0

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**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 1 700 (March). » The Hilux, now available in both Dakar and Legend45 guise, continues to be a big seller. Although the engines remain the same, the top double cab models now vitally get vehicle dynamic control (VDC) and traction control, to counter the VW Amarok and Ford Ranger. Whether it will keep on to sales remains to be seen, but the 4x4 versions have rear diff locks and low-range gearing, making it even more capable than before. **LW choice:** 3.0 D-4D double cab 4x4 Raider.

**Also look at:** Volkswagen Amarok, Nissan Navara, Ford Ranger, Isuzu KB



RAV4	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0 GX	310 800	4/2.0	107/6200	187/3600	7.7
2.0 GX auto	321 600	4/2.0	107/6200	187/3600	7.4
2.2D-4D AWD GX	390 400	4/2.2TD	110/3600	340/2000	5.6
2.2D-4D AWD VX	470 200	4/2.2TD	110/3600	340/2000	6.5
2.5 AWD VX	440 800	4/2.5	132/6000	233/4100	8.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 60 litres. **Average sales per month:** 506. » The RAV4 has grown up a lot since it was first launched in 1994, giving birth to the entire compact SUV market. Now it's been restyled with a much anticipated update, and a wider price range that should open it open to a new range of buyers. **LW choice:** 2.2D-4D AWD GX. **Also look at:** Honda CR-V, Nissan Qashqai / X-Trail



FORTUNER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.5D-4D	391 700	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	8.0
2.5D-4D auto	405 200	4/2.5TD	106/3400	343/1600	9.1
3.0D-4D	470 600	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.5
3.0D-4D auto	483 900	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.4
3.0D-4D 4x4	523 900	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	8.6
3.0D-4D 4x4 auto	537 500	4/3.0TD	120/3400	343/1400	9.8
4.0 V6	502 900	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	12.7
4.0 V6 4x4	556 100	V6/4.0	175/5200	376/3800	13.0

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:**

80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 891.

» SA's best-selling SUV has received an epic makeover, and more recently a spec upgrade - with black interiors! The best news for Joe Soap is the introduction of an entry-level 2.5D-4D 4x2 model. They may look new, but under the skin the Fortuner 4x4 models are still a rough and ready 4x4s. Thanks to its rugged Hilux underpinnings, it is near unstoppable in most conditions. Even the 4x2 models with standard rear diff lock will get farther on a tough off-road route than some other 4x4 vehicles. **LW choice:** 2.5D-4D 4x2. **Also look at:** Chevrolet Trailblazer, Land Rover Discovery Sport, Nissan Pathfinder, Mitsubishi Pajero Sport



LAND CRUISER 70 SERIES	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
Double Cab					
79 4.0 V6	535 400	V6/4.0	170/5200	360/3800	13.6
79 4.2D	561 600	6/4.2D	96/3800	285/2200	13.0
79 4.5D-4D LX V8	630 600	V8/4.5TD	151/3400	430/1200	11.6
Wagon / Station Wagon					
78 4.2D wagon	548 600	6/4.2D	96/3800	285/2200	11.9
76 4.2D station wagon	574 400	6/4.2D	96/3800	285/2200	11.6
76 4.5D-4D LX V8 station wagon	644 900	V8/4.5TD	151/3400	430/1200	11.6

**Service plan:** None **Fuel tank:** 90+90 litres for

s/cab and wagon; 130 litres for d/cab and station wagon. **Average sales per month:** 419» The old-school Cruiser range is supremely robust, without any fancy electronic gizmos. Even though it is basic, you do get some luxuries like air-con, a navigation and entertainment system, and power windows. The long-awaited 79 double cab has now also landed, as has the much anticipated V8 D-4D motor. **LW choice:** 4.0 V6 double cab! And, um, shares in an oil company! **Also look at:** Landy Defender, Jeep Wrangler, Cruiser in a different colour.



FJ CRUISER	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
FJ Cruiser	513 900	V6/4.0	200/5600	380/4400	11.4
FJ Sport Cruiser	539 400	V6/4.0	200/5600	380/4400	11.4

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km **Fuel tank:** 72 + 87 litres **Average sales per month:** 15. » The retro-styled Cruiser not only looks good but also has real-world 4x4 ability, punchy performance from the 200kW V6 engine and a decently refined on-road ride too. With 245mm



ground clearance, a pukka transfer case, ATRAC traction control, a rear differential lock, 700mm wading depth, excellent approach and departure angles and a 200 kW V6 engine, the FJ is amazingly capable off-road. **LW choice:** FJ Cruiser by Rob Green Motorsport. **Also look at:** Jeep Wrangler, Land Rover Defender

LAND CRUISER PRADO	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
4.0 TX	674 300	V6/4.0	202/5600	381/4400	11.3
3.0DT TX	684 700	4/3.0TD	120/3400	400/1600	8.5
4.0 VX	776 600	V6/4.0	202/5600	381/4400	11.3
3.0DT VX	781 000	4/3.0TD	120/3400	400/1600	8.5

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 87 + 63 (150) litres. **Average sales per month:** 194. » It's comfortable, luxurious, should be reliable (it's a Toyota), and has all the 4x4 technology anyone could ask for. The powerful diesel engine finally fixes a Prado weakness, but it is still outgunned by its rivals. Like anything with a Land Cruiser badge, the Prado is a real 4x4. Permanent four-wheel drive, low-range, centre and rear diff locks, traction control, Hill Start Assist, Crawl Control and Multi-terrain. **LW choice:** 4.0 V6 TX. **Also look at:** Mitsubishi Pajero, Nissan Pathfinder / Patrol, Land Rover Discovery, VW Touareg



LAND CRUISER 200	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
4.6 V8 VX	1 069 100	V8/4.6	227/5500	439/3400	13.9
4.5D-4D VX	1 097 800	V8/4.5TD	173/3200	615/1800	10.3

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 93 litres. **Average sales per month:** 29. The big daddy of Toyota's Cruiser family has grown from a highly capable 4x4 into a premium luxury 4x4, and just received a features upgrade. It's still highly capable, but the big Cruiser now has a host of fancy electronics and gizmos. It is engineered to withstand the harshest of 4x4 conditions, despite being a five-star luxury vehicle. It is indeed capable of doing the hard yards. It has low range, a lockable centre diff and crawl mode for low-speed driving. But even with all the gadgets, it has lost some of its "let's head out into the bush" attraction. **LW choice:** 4.5D-4D VX. **Also look at:** Infiniti QX80, Lexus LX, Range Rover, Mercedes-Benz GL



**VOLKSWAGEN Phone: 0860 434 737 Website www.vw.co.za**

TIGUAN	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
1.4TSI 90kW Trend&Fun	334 900	4/1.4T	90/5000	200/1500	6.5
1.4TSI 118kW Trend&Fun	367 500	4/1.4ST	118/5800	240/1750	6.7
1.4TSI 118kW Trend&Fun auto	383 000	4/1.4ST	118/5800	240/1750	7.1
2.0TDI Trend&Fun	358 900	4/2.0TD	81/2750	280/1750	5.3
2.0TDI 4Motion Trend&Fun	424 500	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TDI 4Motion Track&Field	449 500	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TDI 4Motion Sport&Style	463 500	4/2.0TD	103/4200	320/1750	6.5
2.0TSI 4Motion Sport&Style	485 500	4/2.0T	155/5100	280/1700	8.8



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205/60/15" - Dunlop - R730

195/45/16" - Wanli - R720  
205/45/16" - Kenda - R740  
205/55/16" - Yokohama - R795  
205/55/16" - Dunlop - R780  
225/55/16" - Dunlop - R930

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205/45/16" - Kenda - R740  
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**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 64 litres. **Average sales per month:** 256. ➤

The baby Touareg competes in the compact SUV segment, which has recently become very competitive. There's still a model for just about every need, and the Blue Motion models offer outstanding fuel consumption. The Tiguan is still a great all-rounder. With no low range, and a ground clearance of 200mm, the Tiguan is still a soft-roader. The Track&Field versions, which come with underbody protection, are the more rugged models with improved clearance, approach and departure angles. **LW choice:** 1.4TSI 4Motion Trend&Fun. **Also look at:** Toyota RAV4, Subaru Forester, Nissan Qashqai



AMAROK	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
2.0TDI Trendline	424 300	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1600	7.6
2.0TDI Trendline 4Motion	475 300	4/2.0TD	103/3500	340/1600	7.7
2.0BiTDI Highline	454 700	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	7.9
2.0BiTDI Highline auto	472 200	4/2.0TD	132/4000	420/1750	8.2
2.0BiTDI Highline 4Motion	505 700	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.0
2.0BiTDI Highline 4Motion auto	523 200	4/2.0TD	132/4000	420/1750	8.3

**Service plan:** 5 years / 90 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** 360 (March). ➤

The big German bakkie has been upsetting the Ford and Toyota fans by winning awards left right and centre, and its SUV-like cabin aim it squarely at the leisure market. It comes with ESP, Hill Start/hill descent, off-road ABS, traction control, electronic differential lock, a mechanical locking differential, and even a low-range transfer case. The Amarok can go the off-road mile, despite its size, and its towing capabilities have outshone the rest. The automatic Highline controversially has an eight-speed 'box with what is essentially a crawl gear, and no low-range 'box. **LW choice:** 2.0BiTDI 4Motion. **Also look at:** Toyota Hilux, Nissan Navara, Ford Ranger, Isuzu KB



CALIFORNIA BEACH	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
California Beach					
2.0BiTDI 4Motion	696 300	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.4
2.0BiTDI 4Motion auto	714 800	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.8
Caravelle					
2.0BiTDI 4Motion auto	722 800	4/2.0TD	132/4000	400/1500	8.8

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 60 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 80 litres. **Average sales per month:** n/a. ➤

Okay, this isn't your typical 4x4, but for certain outdoor enthusiasts, the VW California Beach is sure to make a lot of sense. If you're one of those "adventure types" who climb and surf and bike and hike, the California Beach might be your ultimate outdoor vehicle. It is spacious – spacious enough, literally – to camp in, and it has VW's 4Motion AWD system and an electronic differential lock, so it can go just about anywhere your adventures lead you. Its show-stopping party trick is a pop-up roof that turns the Kombi into a little house. **LW choice:** 2.0 BiTDI 4Motion DSG. **Also look at:** An old-school VW Camper Van



TOUAREG	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
V6 Elegance	723 300	V6/3.6	206/6200	360/3200	10.9
V6 TDI Luxury	808 400	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	550/2000	7.2
V6 TDI Escape	834 400	V6/3.0TD	180/4000	550/2000	7.3
V8 TDI Executive	1 010 400	V8/4.1TD	250/4000	800/1750	9.1

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 100 litres. **Average sales per month:** 41. ➤

Filling the top-dog position in the line-up is a 250kW/800Nm 4.2-litre V8 TDI. A new eight-speed auto gearbox is standard – across the range. The 4Motion version gets permanent 4x4 with a limited-slip Torsen centre diff and electronic diff locks (EDS) on all four wheels, but no low-range gearing. The V6 TDI model is available in Escape guise, which adds low-range gearing, increased ground clearance, a locking centre diff and an optional rear diff. **LW choice:** V6 TDI. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, BMW X5, Infiniti QX70, Land Rover Discovery, Lexus RX, Mercedes-Benz ML, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado



**VOLVO Phone:** 012 450 4901 **Website** [www.volvocars.com/za](http://www.volvocars.com/za)

V40 CROSS COUNTRY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
T4 Essential	367 700	4/1.6T	132/5700	240/1600	5.5
T4 Essential auto	386 200	4/1.6T	132/5700	240/1600	6.1
D3 Excel	413 100	5/2.0TD	110/3500	350/1500	5.2
D4 Excel	434 700	4/2.0TD	140/4250	400/1750	4.3
T5 AWD Excel	470 100	4/2.0T	180/5500	350/1500	6.4

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 57 litres. **Average sales per month:** 32. ➤

The low-slung V40 Cross Country is an interesting alternative to all those crossovers out there at the moment. It's obviously not a hardcore 4x4, but there is the option of AWD in the top-end T5 Excel model, so the V40 can deal with a bad dirt road. Moreover, the V40 Cross Country looks good, is comfy and offers tons of packing space. Pricing is very competitive, and you even get a five-year maintenance plan as well. If you want a 4x4 that can tackle trails, this isn't the vehicle for you, but if you want a fun and practical ever-day car, the V40 is worth a look. **LW choice:** D4 Excel. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad / Q3, Mercedes-Benz GLA, BMW X1, MINI Countryman, Subaru XV



V60 CROSS COUNTRY	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D4 AWD Momentum	499 900	5/2.4TD	140/4000	420/1500	5.7
T5 AWD Momentum	533 500	5/2.5T	187/5400	360/1800	8.5

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 67.5 litres. **Average sales per month:** New. ➤

Like its smaller sibling, the V40 Cross Country, the V60 Cross Country offers an alternative to modern crossovers and compact SUVs. It still has AWD and a decent amount of ground clearance, but isn't designed for hardcore off-road duty. The V60 is more spacious than the V40 – offering a very impressive amount of luggage space – and boasts some truly wonderful styling. If you want an estate, but also want AWD and loads of space, the V60 Cross Country is worth looking at. It will undoubtedly make you stand out from the crowd. **LW choice:** D4 AWD Automatic. **Also look at:** Audi A4 Allroad, Subaru Outback



XC70	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D5 Elite	499 900	5/2.4TD	158/4000	440/1500	6.4

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 5. ➤

The Volvo XC70 is more a station wagon on stilts than it is an SUV, but it's more capable than one might think. The interior is commodious and the diesel engine is powerful and frugal in equal measure. **LW choice:** Only one model in the line-up. **Also look at:** Audi A4 allroad, Subaru Outback



XC60	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D4 Essential	551 800	4/2.0TD	133/4250	400/1750	4.7
T5 Essential	547 300	4/2.0T	180/5500	350/1500	6.7
D5 AWD Excel	623 400	5/2.4TD	158/4000	440/1500	6.4
T6 Excel	629 300	4/2.0T	225/5700	400/2100	7.3
T6 AWD R-Design	706 300	6/3.0T	242/5400	480/3000	10.7

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 70 litres. **Average sales per month:** 40. ➤

Touted as the safest car in the world (and it probably is), the XC60 has moved the SUV goalposts for the Swedish brand. It's more modern and good-looking, yet still features all the qualities Volvo is renowned for. With a 230mm ground clearance, the XC60 is actually a competent off-roader, and you might find yourself heading towards a more challenging 4x4 track after the Swede dispatches of the soft-roader route without working hard at all. It has no low range, but Volvo's Instant Traction system sorts the traction details out. Hill descent control is also standard. **LW choice:** T6. **Also look at:** Subaru Forester, BMW X3, Audi Q5, Lexus NX, Land Rover Discovery Sport



XC90	PRICE	ENGINE	POWER	TORQUE	L/100KM
D4 Momentum	804 000	4/2.0TD	140/4250	400/1750	4.9
D5 AWD Momentum	853 200	4/2.0TD	165/4250	470/1750	5.8
T5 AWD Momentum	827 400	4/2.0T	187/5500	380/1500	7.0
T6 AWD Momentum	867 000	4/2.0T	235/5700	400/2200	8.0
T8 AWD Momentum	1 005 100	4/2.0STe			

**Maintenance plan:** 5 years / 100 000 km

**Fuel tank:** 71 litres for D4 to T6; 50 for T8.

**Average sales per month:** New. ➤

The order books for the all-new Volvo XC90 are open and the first batch has already sold out. The XC90 is available only with four-cylinder engines, which is a first in this segment. It is, however, not down on power compared to its rivals and it will likely set new standards in fuel consumption and passenger safety in this segment. We haven't driven it yet, but it will likely be the new luxury SUV benchmark. **LW choice:** Still too early to tell, but the D5 AWD seems like a good buy. **Also look at:** Audi Q7, BMW X5, Infiniti QX70, Lexus RX, Mercedes-Benz ML, Toyota Land Cruiser Prado, Volkswagen Touareg








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